

Cosmopolitan

A dark, atmospheric illustration. In the center, a woman with a wide-brimmed hat and a man in a suit are depicted. The woman's face is partially visible, looking towards the viewer. The man is positioned to her right, looking down. The background is dark and textured, with a large, stylized eye visible on the right side. The overall mood is mysterious and dramatic.

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*Short Story from Life
That Surpasses Fiction*



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COSMOPOLITAN

America's Greatest Magazine

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Next Month

All those in whose homes

Ma Callahan

*with her big heart, her homely wisdom, and her
Irish wit, was an eagerly awaited guest every
month, will be glad to know that*

KATHLEEN NORRIS

*has written a new series of Irish stories from life,
the first of which will appear in*

COSMOPOLITAN for JUNE

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What People Call Success

by S. E. KISER

DENY yourself the pleasures youth would claim,
Count every moment precious; never rest;
Let profit-getting be your only game;
Be sure to banish pity from your breast;
Choose eagerness for money as a goad
To drive you daily to new enterprise;
Don't pause to gather flowers beside the road,
Be quick to see where your advantage lies.

BREAK briskly through whatever bars your way;
If sentiment assails you, fling it back;
Be sure to be some richer every day,
Let greed be not among the things you lack;
If you can get refinement as you rush
It may not hurt your chance to be refined,
But never hesitate to crowd or crush;
Have one intention always in your mind.

LET love, if you must love, be nothing more
Than incidental to the end in view,
Or use it as a key to Fortune's door,
Adjust it to the purpose you pursue;
Beware lest golden hours be vainly spent
In setting tender loveliness to rhyme;
See beauty only where a charm is lent
By wealth enough to make it seem sublime.

BE selfish when you must; be friendless, cold;
Let nothing keep you from the goal you seek,
Where boldness offers dividends, be bold,
And miss no chance to pounce upon the weak;
Become a driving power, a mighty force,
Be firm, be strong, be keen, be pitiless;
You'll miss the finer things of life, of course,
But you may win what people call success.



Cast Your Bread Upon the Waters and

By GEORGE ADE

GET a large kit bag for the money orders and be ready. Soon the melancholy pilgrims will be headed eastward.

They will move in vast droves and over them will hang dull clouds of mistrust and apprehension.

Never, since the first migration across the parched foothills of Asia, has there been a movement in mass which seemed so faltering of purpose or so plainly headed for disillusionment.

Slaves of custom and tradition, they somehow feel that every prosperous American is under sentence to gather up a lot of real money and go to Europe and conduct a gift enterprise until the letter of credit is gnawed to the core.

As summer wanes into autumn they will come back to us, plucked down to the pin-feathers. The most numerous souvenirs of the benevolent invasion will be black-and-blue marks.

They will tell, in plaintive tremolo, that the old world is a dreary panorama of wrecked fortunes, groaning tax-payers, starving children and despairing statesmen. Dying men clawing at one another in dungeons.

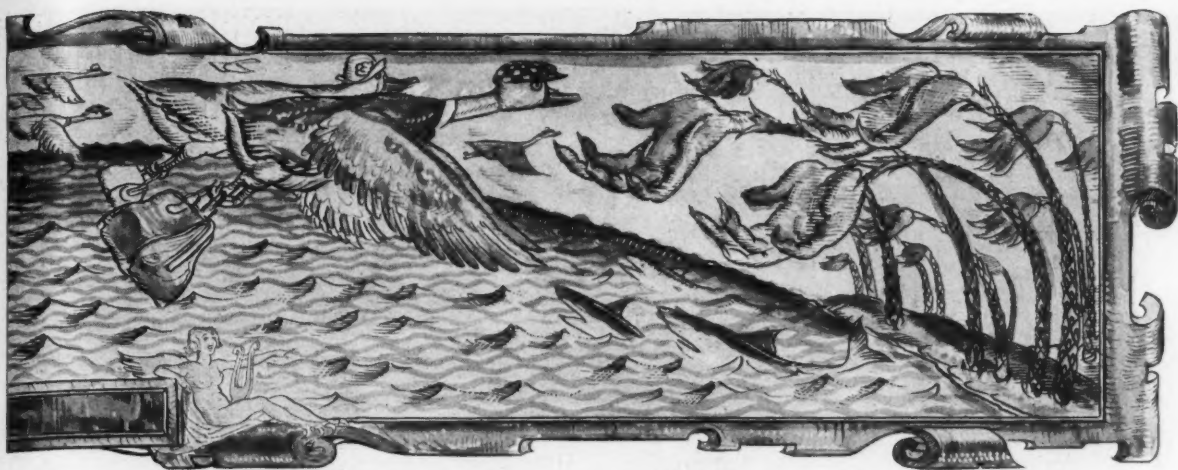
Europe is nerve-racked and anæmic, retaining just enough energy to insist that the U.S.A. is to blame for everything. The Yankee tourist circulates timidly through an atmosphere of dislike and distrust, broadcasting his dollars even while he advertises his unworthiness.

Each returned traveler brings back a serial tale of woe involving demoralized service by common carriers, overcrowded trains, grand and petit larcenies at hotels and restaurants, greed ruling where once gaiety was supreme.

They say it is not the same Europe and they suggest that our countrymen are foolish to cross an important ocean and fight their way through new boundaries just to be annoyed and divided up.

Theoretically, Europe is about to kill the goose that lays the golden egg, but we happen to know that the goose is well named and a glutton for punishment.

Europe's attitude toward us is a puzzler. We put much into the recent fracas and took out nothing except a headache.



It Will Come Back as Ptomaine Poison

Illustrations by

Gordon Ross

Our steady job has been to rush food to anyone, anywhere, who complained of hunger. And even as our generous tourists are sprinkling beautiful dollars through every destitute province, the beneficiaries continue to regard us as money-grubbers and Shylocks.

Europe needs the money but she should play fair with our helpless and gullible relatives.

The trouble is, the aggregated millions which pour into Europe every summer are not organized or safeguarded.

Therefore, let us organize a Society for the Protection of American Travelers. We will call it the S. P. A. T. and every member in good standing will be known as a "SPAT" and will carry a card, to be brandished, if occasion demands, at any bandit wearing a frock coat.

The membership fee will be nominal. New members will be recruited and instructed during the outbound voyage. They will be given addressed envelopes in which to enclose specific reports on extortion, misrepresentation and neglect.

The Society will investigate the complaints of 1923 and every member visiting Europe in 1924 will receive a confidential report as to localities, routes of travel, hotels, shops and restaurants. The tricky and dishonest ones will not be recommended.

If there is accumulated evidence that certain cities or certain hotels or any organized agencies catering to travelers have been brazenly unfair to Americans, the punishment may be made swift and certain. And the wails of penitence will be heard halfway across the Atlantic!

If the suave swindler who did you so neatly the last time you were over knows that you are going to report him to 100,000 of your countrymen, he will be palsied with fear and his methods will become, for the moment, approximately honest.

Just say: "Look out for me. I'm a SPAT!"

I know nothing will come of it, but isn't it a lovely day-dream? And, oh, how many lads with whiskers are hoping, over there, that the blamed thing never will be organized.



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PETER CLARK MACFARLANE

*himself knew the man whose story, a true
Human Document, he begins on
the opposite page*

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*A
Story
from
LIFE
that
Surpasses
FICTION*

PETER CLARK
MACFARLANE

*Who Gathered the Facts
and Wrote the Story*

Calls It

Mercy

*Illustrations by
Herbert M. Stoops*



FOR some months the writer, under commission from COSMOPOLITAN, had been gathering material for a novel based on religion. This quest took him widely over the United States and in the course of it he came upon a most astounding life story. The facts, briefly communicated, evoked the following telegram from the editor of COSMOPOLITAN.

Am intensely interested in that story of Robert N. Wills. Think it is great human document. There is opportunity to present situation which will be of great benefit to humanity in general because it is most impressive story of tolerance I have encountered. Ten years ago, or even five years ago, it would have been impossible for people to understand, but I believe that now with your presentation as fact story it will be fine thing to publish.

(Signed) Ray Long

The writer heartily agreed with Mr. Long that, instead of fictionizing these facts, it was our duty to set them before the public with all their naked force; provided full honor could be done to the tragic central figure in this moving drama while at the same time protecting the privacy of those friends and loved ones who had watched with him through his Gethsemane, who had trod with him to his Golgotha and who now rightfully revere his memory as something at once sacred and inspiring. To insure this, all that proved necessary was to alter the names of individuals and leave this remarkable series of incidents unplaced geographically.

With no more preliminary, I set down the first fact—that Robert N. Wills was born somewhere in the United States, with an inherent gift for friendship, and that he grew up with a passion to preach. He struggled through a small university and into a theological seminary. Having married a country village maiden before he went away to school, he acquired in the course of time two small sons and a diploma. Graduating from the seminary,

he was called to his first pastorate, which was located in the hamlet of A—

Physically Wills was of the "dark, interesting type," with coal-black hair and olive skin; he was above the medium height, symmetrical of figure, cordial in manner, magnetic in personality, very human—just a big, full veined, happy hearted, affectionate country boy through whose dark eyes the grace of God shone brightly; and all his endowments were dedicated to the ministry of the Word. His work prospered pleasantly and the little church was exceedingly proud of Robert N. Wills. It felt that in him it was enjoying the labors of a great man in the days of his obscurity and it basked pleasantly in the warm rays of its golden opportunity.

But one day a chilling shadow fell. While Mrs. Wills, with her two small sons, was away on a visit to her parents, the Reverend Robert N. Wills disappeared—and with him, the pretty, dark-eyed organist!

Shocked inexpressibly, the bereaved church went into mourning for its fallen idol, for his fair young victim and for the aching, stunned, desolate heart of the wife and mother who came back to a revelation of shameful betrayal that was at first unbelievable. The church marveled that flesh so fair could prove so false; that character so strong and bold could melt as wax in the hot flame of passion. It sighed heavily and took up sadly the burden of its grief, quite after the fashion of a simple country folk, and struggled forward once more as it had for half a century, but with the added burden which accrued from the memory of a young leader's perfidy.

Yet, strangely, there were some who could not call it that. Somehow there had been a warmth of affection, a glow of good intent in the eyes of Robert N. Wills that caused those who had known him most intimately and suffered most in his departure, to regard him more in brotherly sorrow than in outraged anger.

But hardly had the church in A— done with its grieving for the lost leader when another small church, in the next state

but one, got for itself a wonderful young pastor with a beautiful, somehow appealing little wife, who played the organ skilfully and whom everybody took to from the first sight of her. But besides rejoicing in its attractive young minister, this church in B— prided itself on having *discovered* him—in the very worldly calling of a newspaper reporter. He had come first to the church one prayer meeting night, directed to gather news of a projected revival meeting.

He had proved a neighborly, interested young fellow who manifested a knowledge of revival meetings; and almost before the church knew, or he knew, he was on his feet and speaking to them—humbly, earnestly and enthusiastically, to the edification of all, so that the members felt their souls burn within them as he volunteered his own suggestions for the success of their campaign for souls. Oddly enough (if anybody here could have known about the little town of A—) this young reporter's first name and middle initial were the same as those of its defaulting pastor, Robert N.; but his last name was Walton—Robert N. Walton.

"You ought not to neglect the gift of exhortation that is within you, my young brother," counseled a gray-bearded elder, beaming placidly.

But young Walton had begun already to look flustered and a little provoked with himself.

"No, no!" he deprecated, swallowing hard. "I—I didn't mean to say anything"; and he shied away, out of the meeting and out of the church.

But the people could not forget. They dragged the young newspaperman back next Sunday, they dragged him into the Sunday school; they got him teaching a class; and once, in the absence of their minister, they actually got him into the pulpit. Frightened apparently, overcome by modesty, giving a most moving manifestation of humility, the young man's soul nevertheless flowed out in what seemed to these small town folk words of fire and power.

"You are a marked man, Brother Walton," declared the old elder, voice sepulchral in its solemn depth. "Marked of God!"

"H-how?" stammered the reporter, almost staggering. It was an unhappy phrase, that—*marked of God*. After its utterance he involuntarily looked behind him.

But the whole congregation was crowding up now to congratulate him upon his talk. Sermon, they called it. They admired him frankly and were peculiarly drawn to him—wonderingly sorry for him, too; for they had never seen a man so embarrassed by a compliment. He, indeed, was looking over their shoulders to where a young woman stood, straight and slim, pale and frightened as himself at all this pother over his little pulpit talk. As quickly as possible the young reporter got away from his new-made, embarrassingly vocable friends, and with the waiting girl hurried from his triumph as from something dire and appalling.

The church, all agog, immensely satisfied with itself for that day, heard with dismay upon the next that the reporter had left town, having obtained a position upon a larger paper in a considerable city; but they remembered him and his fiery pulpit power.

Being an ultra-Protestant denomination, highly congregational in its form of government, the little church's action had to conform only to its own judgment; and when their own minister resigned the old elder was appointed a committee of one to go in search of the newspaperman. He found him prospering unbelievably, city editor now and earning almost as much in a week as the little church could pay for a month. Yet the elder talked to him long and earnestly in the bare parlor of his rented home, a structure so modest as to make it apparent that these two could not be spending all his earnings upon themselves.

"The Lord has marked you with this rare endowment, Brother Walton," concluded the elder tenaciously; "and you owe your life to His service."

The dark face of the city editor grew a shade darker. In his eyes was a strange light that the elder took for conviction of duty; he saw that he had touched the man and he pressed his plea.

The half convinced one lifted his glance to where sat the woman—the woman!—twisting her hands, her face wistful behind the elder's hoary head. There passed between the man and the woman a freighted look. Love and passion had fused them at the first; love and passion and a sense of aloneness together bound them now, for they had defied the conventions of man and the laws of God; and yet they felt somehow close to

God. They had been brought near by sorrow, for a child had come and it had been taken. Her beauty was paler now, yet finer, because of what motherhood and grief had etched into it; and because there was one thing he could not give her—yet; the man had been trying to give her all else that was.

"God is calling you, my brother!" urged the elder in that sepulchral but rather tender voice.

"I wonder if He is?" asked the dark eyes of the husband to the wistful eyes of his wife. "I wonder if there could be mercy like that in His heart for a sinner like me."

"Oh, yes, yes! He is. There . . . there must be," shouted the brown, liquid eyes of the woman.

Walton sat awhile thinking, thinking—of himself darkly, of this woman fondly, of another woman remorsefully, of two children who called her mother but had now none whom they could call father. He thought of it all and shuddered in the soul of him—a situation he had created and was powerless now to uncreate. Then he thought of what it was the old elder held out to him. To him—least among men—had been extended an opportunity to retrieve other men's lives though his own remained unretrieved.

There surged up in him once more the "call to preach"—a thing which the man who has not felt it can never quite understand and which the man who has can never quite explain. Once an old actor said to the writer, away back in his own barnstorming days, "Nobody should be on the stage who can make a living off of it." So perhaps no man ought to preach who can by any means escape it.

"If you've 'eard the East a-calling', you won't never 'eed naught else," sings Kipling; and when once you've joyed in the urge to stand up and exhort your fellows to better ways of living; when as a humble, quaking, doubting messenger of the Most High, you've gone where there was sickness or mourning or deep trouble, and there tried to speak the consoling word, to do the helpful thing; when you've read to dulling ears the message that is hungered for when all other messages have palled; when you've been amazed to find the broken-hearted gather strength from your weak, unworthy self and wring your hand in lasting gratitude as if you'd brought some supernatural help to them—it's a thing you'll want to keep on doing. You'll do it and you'll do it. You'll spend and be spent to the end of your life and get out of each day of it a compensation that you would not trade for all the wealth of the Rockefellers and the Fords combined.

That is the *call to preach*! This city editor felt it irresistibly, although to answer it was to place his peace in jeopardy—and how much more he could never have surmised. But he did answer it.

"I'll come, Elder!" he decided, and his lips clamped tightly.

A little cry escaped the woman, a cry that the elder thought was of joy; and it might have been. But the face of Robert N. Walton was graver when he had spoken and his shoulders bowed themselves as if beneath a load.

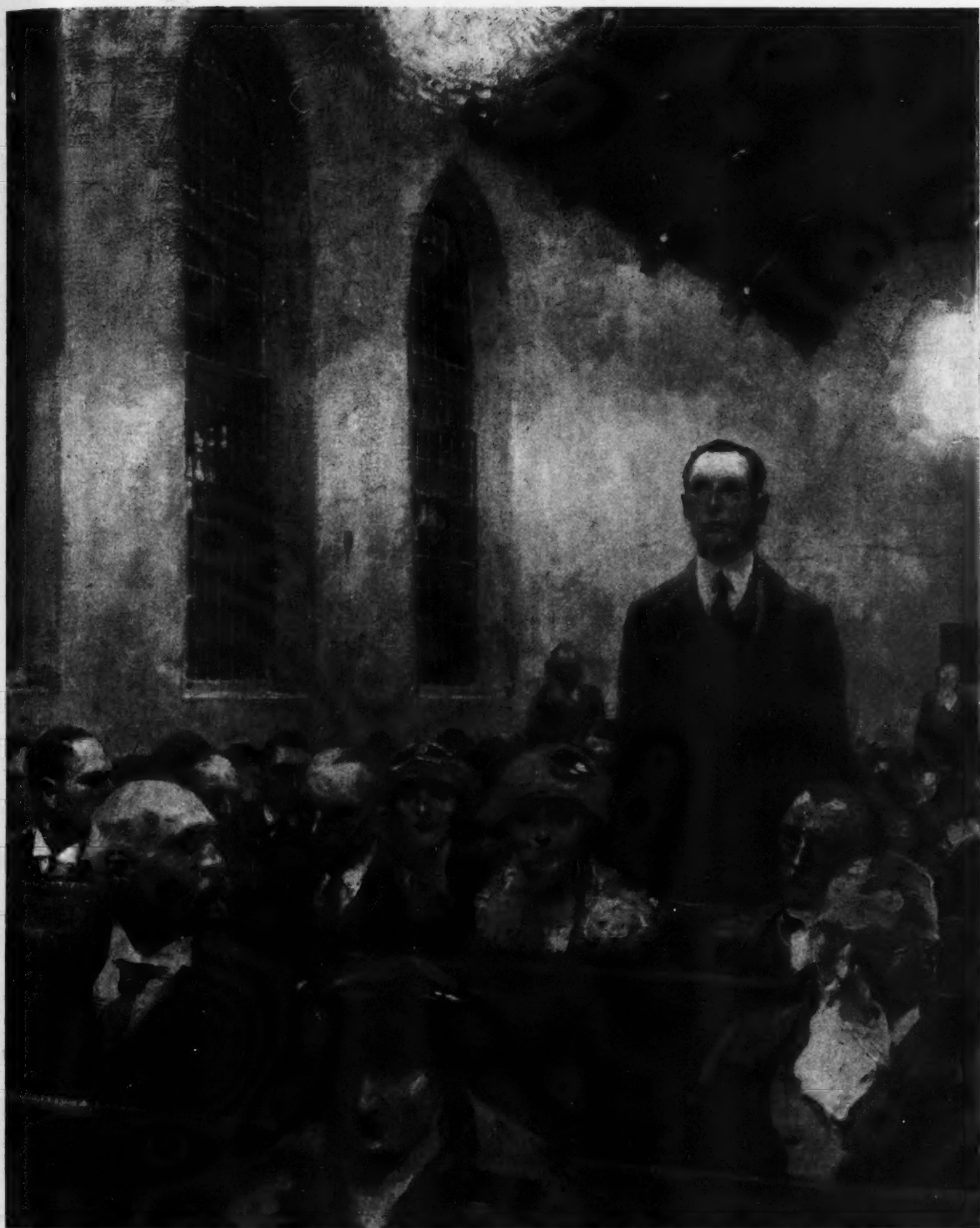
Yet apprehension seemed to have been unnecessary. For five whole years he was permitted to minister to those devoted people in the little town of B—, with his faithful companion playing the organ between mothering two baby boys, who came along in a perfectly natural rhythm. For just one example of young Walton's success then: five of the sanest, strongest young men of the town were induced by him to enter the ministry, and each of them occupies today a distinguished position in one of the great communions of America.

And yet this happy work was doomed—doomed to end abruptly and mysteriously, with Robert N. Walton disappearing from the town of B— almost as Robert N. Wills had disappeared from the hamlet of A—.

Still, the mystery rather oozed out of the disappearance when it was learned that he had gone only two hundred miles to a charge in the flourishing city of C—, which claimed fifty thousand and boasted a metropolitan air; for the folks at B— had always known they must lose their paragon some day. So now—even though his departure had been startlingly unconventional—they reconciled themselves with proud boastings that their late minister would make his mark, even in a city.

Not that Robert N. Walton promised to be a great pulpit orator. No. But he possessed pleasing gifts of impassioned utterance and this city of C— speedily awoke to the fact that it had now a distinctly *man's man* in one of its pulpits—an excessively human person who never wore his clerical clothes or his clerical manner except where the occasion demanded it.

"You don't look like a minister," protested a businessman one day. "You look like a good fellow."



The reporter was speaking to them—earnestly and enthusiastically, so that the members felt their souls burn.

"A minister is a good fellow," suggested Walton, with a slight smile; "though he doesn't always know how to show it."

It became speedily the general judgment that Walton was a good fellow; yet in all his contacts with men he lifted them. When he sat with his coat off in his preferred spot in the bleachers, or when he bared a muscled arm in his favorite bowling alley and loosed his slow smile on all around, all seemed somehow to brighten—conversations, manners, characters even. There was, too, with all his modest affability, an essential dignity. Nobody slapped him on the back, and yet men liked to get close to him as if there was tonic in his presence.

Most amazingly did they tell him the deep, dark secrets of their lives, the sins they had done, the sins they were doing and could not cease from doing; and Walton flung out his hands to them and hung on tightly. They got a feeling that he did not shun them because they were sinning or had sinned, but that he loved them, and they believed that if they clung tightly to him in return he might be able somehow to help them.

So for years Walton's influence percolated through this industrial city like human radium; and how far it had traveled, just what it had come to mean, was witnessed when one day there called at his study a tall, overdressed, full-chested man with small

eyes, a large nose and a dreadnaught chin, whose ostentatious manner was modified by an attempt to be affable and ingratiating.

"Stall is my name," announced the caller.

"Yes, I know," said Walton. "You are in politics."

"Have a cigar," acknowledged Mr. Stall, with a bland bow and the proffer of his silver-bound morocco case.

Walton, among his other humanities, was fond of a good cigar. He selected one and passed it experimentally beneath his nose. "Evidently not a campaign smoke," he smiled.

"Well, in a way it is," admitted his visitor. "Yes, Doctor Walton"—and the tall gentleman who was in politics hitched his chair closer, while attempting still to appear casually at ease.

"Some of the—some of the boys—ahem, have been urging me to run for mayor. But I thought—well, I thought I would just kind of like to have a talk with you about it, Doctor."

"You for mayor?"

The smile had gone out of Walton's face; he lowered his brows somewhat and from under them shot one of those through-and-through glances of which he was at times unexpectedly capable.

Under this glance Mr. Stall squirmed, for by it, in it, he felt himself weighed and found utterly wanting. Yet by this time the eyes of the minister had softened and he was looking his visitor over with a sort of solicitude for that gentleman's personal welfare.

"I—I wouldn't think it would be worth your while—a man of your interests—to muddle himself up with a race for mayor—not in this town, no!" suggested the clergyman, as if his convictions on the subject strengthened the more he thought of it; yet as he finished speaking he manifested the supreme tact of looking, not at the political aspirant, but at the swift forming ash on his cigar. For at all times Walton manifested great knowledge of the ways and habits of men—whoever they were—great sympathy for and subtle understanding of the temptations and impulses of men. Especially did he avoid hurting their feelings—even those whom his duty compelled him to oppose. So now he wished to avoid hurting Mr. Stall.

"No?" ejaculated that gentleman, slightly surprised, considerably crestfallen; yet managing in a moment strategically to conceal the most of both. "Well, of course," he admitted in suspended tones, then reached for his hat, "I—I didn't want to make up my mind without consulting you, Doctor."

"Now that was mighty fine of you, Stall," assured Mr. Walton, with a level glance that without being a bit hard was most unalterably firm. "Drop in any time. Thank you for the cigar." And he shook hands just as if he really liked Mr. Stall; and neither is there any doubt that he did. As a matter of fact, that gentleman could hardly avoid liking him, even though as he went down the steps he was laying his cherished mayoralty dream away in moth balls until such time as it might please God to call the Reverend Robert N. Walton to service elsewhere. That was the way it had been done.

And this was what had come to the ex-newspaperman in a ten years' ministry in C—; a position of such prestige and power that no man would dare run for office in the city or the county without the stamp of his approval. Yet never once did

he let himself go in a burst of honest pride over the standing he had achieved. On the contrary it seemed to frighten him; for his always painful modesty became more noticeable as whiter and whiter beamed the light that played upon his deeds. He was widely recognized as one of the most effective and successful ministers in a great denomination, and yet never once had his picture been allowed to appear in one of its weekly papers—neither in any daily newspaper, if one had taken time to think of it.

Never once had he appeared upon a district or state convention program of his denomination. Again and again his name was enrolled for such honor; again and again one reason or another,

each seemingly legitimate, fortuitously prevented his appearance. These failures began to pique and disappoint his members; yet if Sister Brown was ill or Deacon Jones was passing through a business crisis, so that the pastor would leave neither the one nor the other, who could arraign that innocently devoted man who would rather fulfill the law of Christ than splurge in a convention address? Nobody—absolutely nobody!

Even when he stunned his people and shook the very city by his sudden resignation and almost overnight departure, there were those who could understand it. They said: "Why, Brother Walton always leaves that way. He's just so tender hearted he can't stand these long drawn out good byes."

Whatever the reason, the fact was clear that on one Lord's Day he was the accepted and revered shepherd of the flock in C—, and on the next he was preaching his inaugural discourse in D—.

But this time the pastorate was in a city of a million—sure testing place of pulpit quality. Moreover, this church in D—, while it had plenty of the humbler folk in it, yet was more or less of a rich man's church with the rich man's traditional way of doing things—by proxy, through the medium of a check book—hiring people to serve God for him, sending a substitute to the battle front in the war with sin and poverty.

"No more of that for you men," commanded Robert Walton boldly when he had called his chief pillars together. "No hired workers in this church but me. Calls on the sick, work among the poor, looking after the broken-down and discouraged, carrying the social gospel to the slums of this city—you men must do your personal share of that your personal selves—if you understand!"

This group of good men and strong blinked a little uncertainly, quite sure that they did not understand. There was a United States Senator in that group. He was also a capitalist. There were executives in some of the greatest industries in the world sitting in that church study.

"This church cares how its members and the neighbors of its members get along," Walton was expounding, fervidly. "It is your duty to manifest that care. Tomorrow afternoon, Senator Jones, instead of going to your club to chat and read the afternoon papers, or out to the links, I want you to take these names of people who work in your steel mills and go and call on them in their homes, find out why this boy was not in Bible school, why that girl was missing from Christian Endeavor,



The elder was appointed to go in search of the newspaperman.

why that mother has not been at church for two Sundays, nor her husband since I've been here."

For that was a part of Robert N.'s notion of church organization. His church lay on the dividing line between the residences of the well-to-do and a section of industrial homes; and he had his membership card-indexed and the follow-ups were in his hand.

"Some of the women from down there may be calling on Mrs. Jones, Senator," the minister explained, still serious, still innocently matter-of-fact, "to know why she has been absent for three Lord's Days. If they do, I want them received. They may even be as free in offering suggestions about how the Jones family life might be reorganized so its members can get to church as Mrs. Jones would be about suggestions to them. If so, I want them listened to."

Walton smiled on the Senator as he said this, but it was still a serious smile—over a perfectly astounding suggestion—yet not so unreasonable, once it was considered from a thoroughly Christian point of view; but—highly revolutionary nevertheless. Still, Senator Jones was a big enough man to be thinking very deeply about it, as about what had been proposed for him to do. He gaped slightly and studied his list, then lifted his eyes and studied his pastor.

Walton's words had been those of an autocrat. But he had not spoken like an autocrat. Above all, his expression, under the Senator's scrutiny, was not that of an autocrat. And here I must let the reader into a secret. Myself, I knew this Robert N. Walton in this period of his life, this day of his ministry of power. I knew him and honored him, no more suspecting than the people of his church that there might be a dark spot in his life.

But, accustomed to look rather deeply into the faces of men, I had noted something. In his eyes were two areas of shadow, so elusive that it was impossible to determine whether they were projected from within or reflected from without—but there they were, imparting to his every glance a look of chastening and humbled pride that seemed to me highly appropriate and revealing in the eyes of a very consecrated minister. There was also about his lower lip a peculiarity. When Robert N. Walton looked at you very straight, very earnestly, his lower lip fell away from his teeth, not loosely but on an even line from corner to corner of his mouth, a little like the expression of an animal at bay; yet there was nothing displeasing in it. It was spiritual, rather, and I know now it was the reflection of a

soul at bay. With that expression in his eyes and on his mouth, Robert N. Walton couldn't seem autocratic, but he could look the most powerful appeal into the soul of a fellow being that I have ever experienced.

So now, as he looked at this church board, composed in part of great business executives, and told them that for the good of their own souls they ought to get out and do personally some of the work they had been accustomed to hire thirty dollar a week men and women to do for them—told them, in effect, that ersatz Christianity was all wrong, wasn't Christianity at all—

he made them feel this in their souls. The United States Senator, under that modest, convincing gaze, felt it and twisted in his chair, but felt also his inability to mend. With sorrowful eyes he confessed both his failure and his inability, by saying:

"Brother Walton, I would give anything in the world if some pastor had talked to me like that twenty years ago. Now it's too late."

Walton looked at the Senator with tears. "It's never too late, Brother Jones!" he said, the words tearing themselves out from somewhere inside with a sound as if it cost a heart's agony to utter them.

And this new board, sensing but not understanding, felt themselves humbled as in the presence of one who served at greater cost than ever one of them had served—one who spared himself nothing; and they, in his pastorate, spared themselves less than they ever had before.

But—religious work in a great city moves slowly. It is preaching to a procession. A Gulf Stream of humanity flows by; and into that stream Robert N. Walton filtered himself. But always with that shadow in his eye and from year to year growing larger, the ominous thing it stood for more imminent, more threatening with each twelve-month. For the edifice he was building towered steadily higher. He could no longer keep his picture out of the public prints.

To make matters worse an international convention of his denomination was coming in this very city of D—. Yet through all the work of getting ready to entertain that convention, Walton bore a wheel horse part; for he was that kind of man. His people, his fellow ministers, the community at large depended on him; and never yet had they depended in vain.

But when the work was done, when all was ready and delegates by thousands were pouring into the city, Robert N. Walton was quietly slipping out of it.



He found Walton city editor now and earning as much in a week as the little church could pay for a month.

He had managed another of those sudden resignations of his. And so, while convention platforms thundered with the message of a militant gospel and vast pavilions rang with the refrains of the mighty hymns of his church, one of those who had worked humbly and earnestly and passionately for the success of that historic gathering was listening from afar, looking on from a distance, wistful yet fearful; for there can be no doubt that Robert N. Walton fled breathless from the convention city; that Peter, after he had denied his Lord, leaving his garment in the hand of the young man who plucked at it in the garden, and flying naked, was not more panic-stricken.

Restlessly, unhappily, the fugitive essayed two short, sterile pastorates; and then, with a great sigh of relief, fell into the arms of a warm hearted folk who could love him as he wanted to be loved, and who would let him love them as his heart must love. This new ministry in the city of E— promised to be his crowning work—a ministry of maximums, with not a cloud upon the sky; for there was now a thousand miles and a quarter of a century between him and that—that from which he shrank! Here the dark shadows went out of his eyes and that look of a soul at bay began to be seen less frequently upon his lips.

But, ah, the intuitions of women! One Sunday morning, as the brown-eyed woman sat at church, in the sixth year of their residence in E—, there came over her a sudden inexplicable chill of apprehension; she gave one quick, startled glance around her, hoping to discern what eye had stabbed her, but could not. She shivered and breathed a prayer, then turned her great, shiny eyes hungrily up to Robert. He was preaching one of his most compelling sermons, warm with the compassion of a heart that had been bruised till it was tender, bruised by its own mad passions.

Robert, all undivining, finished this sermon and, after the benediction, went according to his habit to the lobby where, with a handkerchief about his wilted collar and perspiring throat, he began to give all of his vitality that was left in cordial hand clasps to friends and strangers alike—strangers preferred. Among these strangers today were two women, trembling under the excitement of a great discovery; at the same time they were steadying themselves with considerable resolution. One of them took the hand of Robert N. Walton, but instead of shaking it held it while she looked straight at him and announced in a low, firm voice: "You are Robert N. *Wills*."

The minister stood taut from head to foot for an instant studying the face before him, perhaps for features that he might recognize, perhaps for signs of mercy.

"Yes," he answered decisively, but in a voice just as low; then shook the hand he held and dropped it.

But the first lady presented the second. "How do you do, Brother Wills?" the latter inquired; but her voice too had been low. "I enjoyed your sermon," she said; and the two passed on; but with the shadowy spots again in the eyes of Robert N. Walton and that expression of a soul at bay once more about his mouth.

However, the minister continued shaking hands. He manifested his usual concern for the welfare of each person who spoke to him; he thanked gratefully those who made kindly comments on his sermon; he saw his deacons taking the addresses of all strangers; he even manifested presence of mind enough to make sure that they got the addresses of two particular strangers.



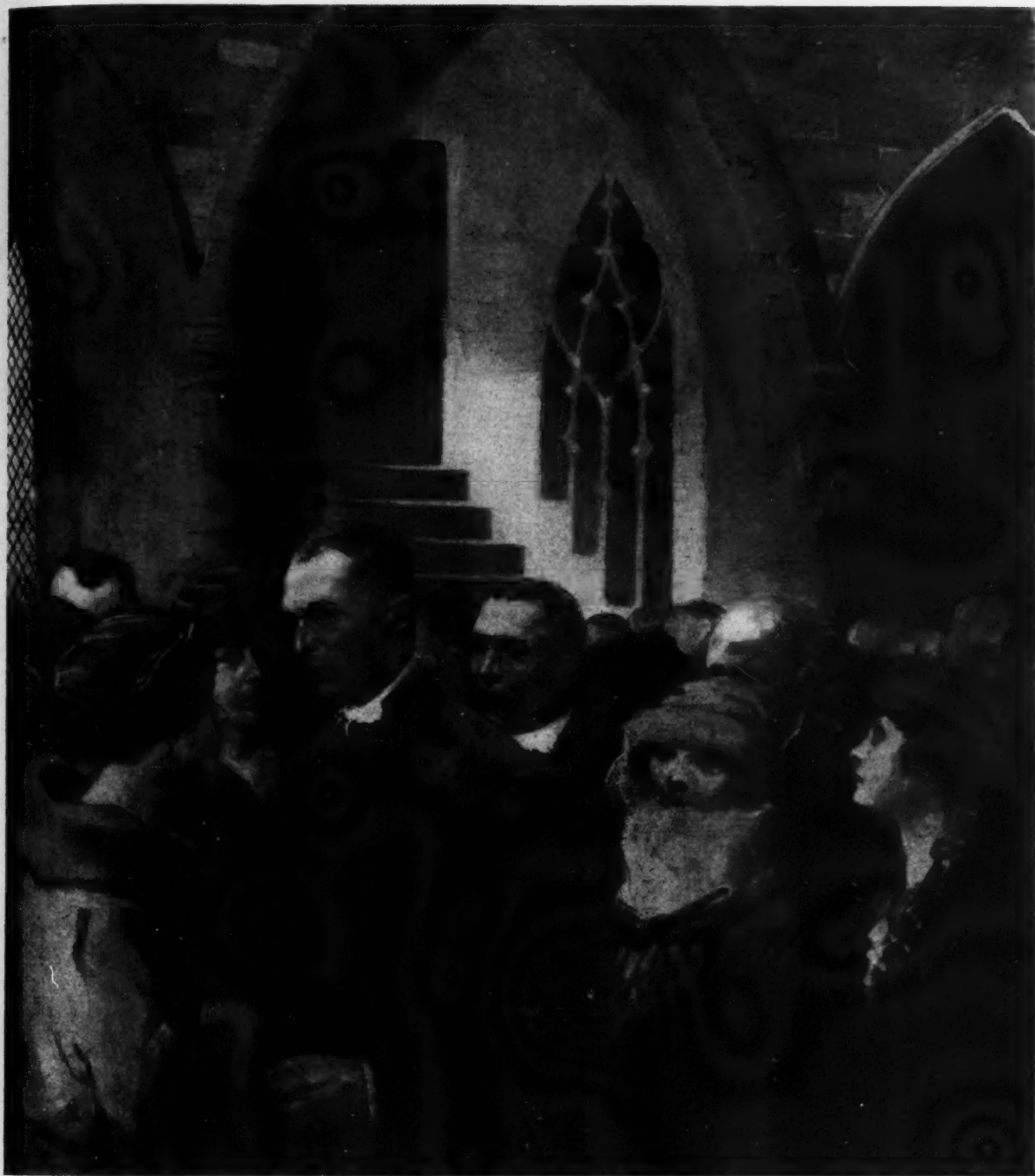
The minister stood taut from head to foot, studying

When the sexton came up to consult him about the placing of extra chairs for the usual Sunday evening crowds, he answered him with conscientious detail—though suspecting that, for him, there would be no evening service.

Even the Sunday dinner in the Walton home was carried off quite as usual. If the man at the head of the table talked little, ate little, that was nothing uncommon; for he seldom did much of either immediately after preaching. Yet from time to time the woman at the other end of the table noted him narrowly. When the meal was over, when the sons had taken themselves away to read and the inevitable Sunday guest or two had departed, she followed into the study, pretending to be wiping her hands upon her apron. In reality she was wringing them.

"Has it . . . has it come?" she gasped.

Her husband's constricted lips could frame no word, but he nodded and sank into the Morris chair with a groan—the Morris chair the ladies' aid society had presented him that Christmas past.



the face before him, perhaps for features that he might recognize, perhaps for signs of mercy.

"Oh! . . . Oh, Robert!" the woman cried. "Now? After all these years? It seems so . . . so unjust." Her face was white, her eyes avoided his.

"Unjust to you—yes," replied her husband, who by now had found his tongue. "But nothing can be unjust to me," he reproached himself bitterly, striking his breast.

Yet after that the two stared at each other dumbly, the same thought rising in both their minds. For a quarter of a century their sin had hunted them from place to place, threatening the work that providentially they had been permitted to do; and they had allowed themselves to be so driven—unprotesting, feeling that it was right that they should be hounded by their past; but now protest was beginning to be born. The man's heart was here too deeply attached to think of having its tentacles torn out by the roots once more. Something in him rebelled at being driven from his last and greatest field.

"Mama," he proposed desperately, "let's go and talk to those women."

"Yes—let's," she responded bravely; "right—right now."

They went; but at first the women received them doubtfully. Yet as Robert Walton pleaded—with the white, wistful face of his companion, wasted now with twenty-five years of mothering, seconding every word—as he pleaded, something in his air of deep sincerity touched them, some perception of the real hopelessness of retreat for him dawned upon them, and with it came a certain sense of awe at pulling down that wide structure of faith which had been built upon this erring nature of his—something of all this convinced the women of a duty quite unexpected.

"What good are you going to accomplish, exposing me?" the dejected minister argued in conclusion. "I would have exposed myself if I could have seen how it would do anything but harm."

"We won't expose you!" exclaimed one of the women impulsively. "We'll keep your secret, Brother . . ."

"Brother Walton!" joined in the other woman tactfully.

The minister and his wife arose and (Continued on page 153)



The Dash After

By BERTON

Illustrations by

It's furnished exactly like homes by the myriad,
There isn't a piece that belongs to a *period*.
Please let me lend you a book I have got,
Entitled, 'Antiques—Which is Which, What is
What!'

II

MR. and Mrs. Montgomery Lloyd
Had money enough so they were not annoyed
By hearing the wolf at their domicile's door;
They simply were well-to-do folks, nothing more.
They had a nice house and a good looking car
And a maid, when she'd stay—but you know how they are!

The Lloyds were a couple not modish or snappy
But rather—well, bourgeois and humdrum and happy.
Their children were two,
Herb, fourteen; and Sue,
A ten year old maiden with eyes that were blue.
Whatever life brought them they made quite the best of it
And worried but little about all the rest of it.

Then one day a friend came to visit. Alas!
She posed as a friend, but a snake in the grass
Could scarce spread more hideous
Poison insidious
Than she, as she lingered for several weeks
And filled the Lloyds full of a yen for antiques!

"Oh Mabel," she sighed (were a serpent to hiss
It could not breathe toxins more deadly than this),
"Oh dear Mabel Lloyd,
I cannot avoid
Regretting that you, with your *wonderful* taste
Should let all your artistic sense go to waste;
I can't understand how you've failed to discern it,
you're
Losing your soul 'mid this commonplace furniture.
This house of yours here
Has no 'atmosphere.'

THUS nurtured, the virus
Spread quickly enough.
The Lloyds grew desirous
Of Period Stuff.

They haunted the auction rooms, searched up and down
The musty and fusty old shops of the town,
They motored to bucolic hamlets to seek
A possible bargain in something antique.
They pored over catalogues. Half of their mail
Was letters from dealers who offered for sale
Stuff that was guaranteed "Pure Renaissance,"
"Sheraton," "Louis Quatorze," "Louis Quinze";
They constantly babbled
Of "lintels," and gabbled
Of "highboys" and "lowboys" and "Seventeen fronts"
Of inlay, mosaic and other such stunts.
They talked of "patina," whatever that means,
Of "panels" and "stretchers" and lacquer and glaze,
While Monty Lloyd dug way down deep in his jeans,
For it is the husband who pays and who pays.
Meanwhile, to make space,
For the Antiques to grace,

The home of the Lloyds, week by week, day by day.
The secondhand dealer was carting away
Great overstuffed sofas and overstuffed chairs
And Mission style tables and oak chiffoniers,
And bedsteads of brass—very costly affairs—
And bright bird's-eye maple suites, cherished for years;
Montgomery Lloyd had once paid quite a lot for them
And—if you've known secondhand dealers—you'll
guess



The PERIOD BRALEY

Ralph Barton

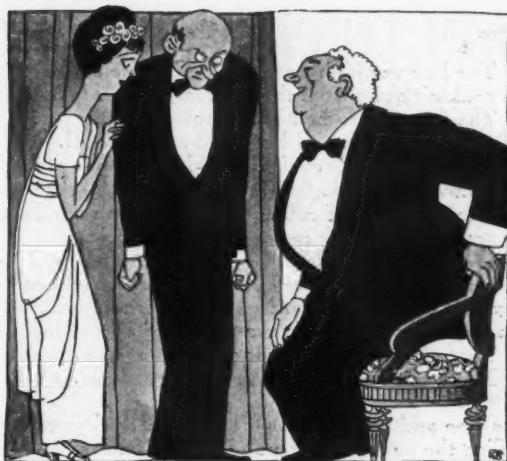
How much, from those vultures, he finally got for them.
Whatever you say, it was probably less!

However, in time, all the house was refurnished
With valid antiques boasting various ages,
Which, rubbed up, repaired, reupholstered and burnished
By artisans drawing imperial wages,
Presented a spectacle highly artistic
Which made antiquarians wax eulogistic.

The pride of the Lloyds
Was quite beyond "voids,"



(Excuse my Manhattanese, frequently I'm
A bit up against it when seeking a rhyme),
They beamed and they glowed
And constantly showed
Their treasures to visitors, dwelling upon
The quests they had made and the lengths they had gone
To get this buhl cabinet, that secretaire,
This Chippendale chair and that Florentine chest,



This bombe front bureau of worm-eaten cherry,
This fauteuil, that rococo table. A guest
Was in for a heavy and long dissertation
On all that's pertaining to home decoration!

III

TIME passed. "It's a sort of a way that time has"
(As Artemus Ward said, a long time ago).
It fox-trots along as if stepping to jazz:
The Lloyds lost a bit of the glamour and glow
Which first had affected them
When they had trailed their antiques and collected them.
Somehow or other they presently found
That though all the pieces they'd gathered around
Would certainly please any true antiquarian
They were not exceedingly utilitarian.
For Herbert, their boy, was a natural kid
And when, with his gang, he'd go romping amid
This period stuff in his blithe boyish way
The Lloyds had some shocking repair bills to pay.
And sweet little Sue,
Though meaning to do
Of course, no particular damage or harm,
Would perch herself, oftentimes, up on the arm
Of a period chair,
Which cost fifty dollars or so to repair.

Montgomery Lloyd
Himself was annoyed
To find that, when weary from business in town,
There wasn't a couch in the house he could flop on,
There wasn't a chair he could suddenly drop on,
He had to use caution in sitting him down.



The key wouldn't open the Florentine chest,
 You couldn't quite trust the refectory table,
 The four-poster bed often broke up their rest
 Collapsing with him and his slumbering Mabel.
 The Chippendale chairs gave his spine many twinges,
 The drawers of the highboys and lowboys all stuck,
 The doors of the cabinets shrieked on their hinges,
 The grandfather clock never properly struck.
 Whenever a neighborly party assembled
 Among their Antiques, both the Lloyds fairly trembled.
 They just couldn't give their guests friendly attention
 Because every move they made caused apprehension,
 That something they sat on or leaned on, perhaps,
 Might suddenly fall in a state of collapse.

Thus woe and unhappiness crept on them clammy,
 Spoiling the peace of this middle-class family.
 Their nerves were unsettled, their tempers grew sharp,

They'd constantly bicker and quarrel and carp,
 They seemed to be headed for nervous prostration,
 When, luckily, there came a warm invitation
 To visit old friends in a Middle West town.
 "Let's go," remarked Monty, "I'm feeling run down.
 Let's go and see Bill and his wife. It'll be
 A rest for yourself and the children and me."

IV

BILL QUINN and his wife
 Were well fixed in life
 In fact, like the Lloyds, they were nice, pleasant folk,
 Midway between those who are wealthy—or broke.
 Their dwelling was ample,
 Well built and well placed,
 A typical sample
 Of middle-class taste,
 And furnished, as well as the Quinns seemed to wish,
 With sets and with suites made in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Is ample and sturdy and comfy and deep
 And never collapses to wake them from sleep;
 While Herbert and Sue
 Romp all the house through
 With Mary and Jimmy Quinn, jumping about
 On furniture most undeniably stout,
 Although, as the Lloyds aver, often enough
 It hasn't the "aura" of Period Stuff.
 Thus, ere they depart,
 All their babble of Art
 Has planted the lure of Antiques in the heart
 Of the Quinns, who begin right away to aspire
 To period pieces, and greatly desire
 More knowledge of Heppelwhite, Adam, and such
 —And where they can buy it, and also How Much?

V

OH the black heart of Man! Oh the boundless
 ingratitude
 Displayed by the Lloyds in their subsequent attitude!
 For when they returned to their own domicile,
 Soothed, calmed and refreshed in a wonderful style
 By life in a home
 Which, from cellar to dome,
 Was furnished with comfort, whatever it lacked
 In treasures antique—very easily cracked;
 Yes, after returning
 From joyous sojourning
 Where chairs could be sat upon, beds could be slept upon,
 Tables could even be heavily leapt upon,
 Drawers didn't stick and the various hinges
 Worked without any rheumatism twinges;
 Yes, after that visit,
 O Honor, where is it?
 The Lloyds sent the Quinns that insidious book
 "Antiques; Which is Which, What is What!" and they
 took
 Particular care that the Quinns shouldn't rest



Yet when, after greetings which follow such meetings,
 The Lloyds were ensconced in the guest room's
 seclusion,
 They sighed, "It is sad the Quinns' taste is so
 bad.
 Such furniture! Strewn round in reckless profusion!
 Those overstuffed sets, and those Mission iniquities!
 We really must teach them to purchase antiques."

The Lloyds then proceed in
 Some two or three weeks
 To bring to that Eden
 A craze for Antiques,
 While Monty Lloyd sprawls on the overstuffed chairs
 In comfort and ease; and the bed his wife shares

Till they got the frenzy and went on the quest
 For Antiques galore!
 Oh I greatly deplore
 The fact, but it's true, that the Quinns got the fever!
 And then Monty Lloyd, the base, wicked deceiver,
 Contrived, through a dealer, to sell his collection
 With some indirection
 To Quinn.
 A serpent's reward for regard and affection!
 And now, if you happen sometime to drop in
 To visit the Lloyds, you will find that their home
 Though lacking, perhaps, all the art you might wish,
 Is furnished with comfort, from cellar to dome,
 With stuff manufactured in Grand Rapids, Mich!

By KATHLEEN
NORRIS

*A story of the
Place called
HOME*

The Guests of Honor

*Mary Ann
was her father's favorite.*

*Illustrations by
James Montgomery Flagg*

"IT COULD be done," said Juliana, "by simply turning the sit-drawing room into the dining room, and beginning late."

"Making the bedrooms the garage and the kitchen the foyer," Dan Rutherford said good-naturedly.

His wife shot him a dagger look.

"Oh, Dan!" she said, in a tone blended of patience, protest and contempt. "If that's the way you are going to look at it, we might as well give up the whole thing *now*!" she added, bitterly, yet with a watching eye.

"I can imagine changing the 'sit-drawing room,' as you call it—" Dan was beginning, taking his pipe out of his mouth, when his wife interrupted him.

"I called it the drawing room long before the Cruikshanks and the Lessings came to the Point," she asserted defensively.

"You called it the sitting room," stated Dan inflexibly.

"Well, I don't care what I called it," Juliana conceded hastily.

"The thing is, are we going to entertain these people who have been so tremendously decent to us, or are we not?"

"In the strict sense of the word, any dinner you and I gave to the Cruikshanks, the Lees and the Lessings would entertain them, all right," Dan diverged. "It would entertain them enormously to see old Lizzie—"

"I'd have Kate helping Lizzie!" Juliana said quickly.

"I see. And what do we accomplish by having it begin late, as you said?"

"Begin at eight," Juliana elucidated, beginning to revive.

"That means that we sit at the table at least two hours, talking and dawdling, and then it's ten, you see—not but what they could play bridge if they wanted to—" mused Juliana in an undertone.

"But you and I don't play bridge, Jule."

"No, I know. But they could!"

"Why not just talk?" suggested Dan.

"Oh, we can't—very well, with people like that! We don't know their friends, and they don't know ours. They're so much

older than we are. They'd much rather play cards," Juliana decided.

"I don't see why the deuce we have to give them a dinner at all," said Dan, returning to his original position.

Juliana promptly returned to hers.

"Because they've been so wonderful to us, Dan, giving the children so many lifts, and sending you a card to the club even after we didn't join it, and having us to lunch that day—"

"Yes, but that wasn't in any way a formal invitation, dear. We were at the club and the Lessings simply included us in their group, everybody did his own ordering—"

"But they paid for us all, Dan!"

"Yes, I know. But—"

Dan's face, up to now merely the pleased, dreamy face of a man enjoying the leisure of pipe, basket chair and garden sweetness upon a spring afternoon, grew somewhat more sober, and he turned toward his wife in some seriousness.

"The thing is this, dear," he said. "You and I have been here ten years—there was nothing at the Point but a few old shanties when we came."

"Exactly—we're the old residents!" Juliana supplied triumphantly.

"Well, so is old Crooker, the oyster man, if you come to that," Dan reminded her with his maddening irrelevance. "Anyway," he resumed, "you and I bought two acres down here for eight hundred dollars, and the whole house cost only four thousand more. Now, two years ago, along come these rich and fashionable families, to 'discover' the Point, and they fence and they build, and their boathouses cost more than our whole home, and their clubhouse more than any other in the world, and—well, we try to keep step with them! I think it's a mistake. Why—"

"Keep step with them, Dan—why, that's just the one thing I *don't* do," Juliana said quickly and proudly. "They *know* that you are a writer—beginning to be a writer—and that we have no money, and only Lizzie to help me, and that you clean your own car and I make the girls' dresses. That's just why they—"

well, why they like me," finished Juliana, childishly shy over the self-praise, and flushing eagerly in self-defense.

She was so pretty, in her blue enveloping apron, with the dark curls of her soft hair framing her blue eyes, her wide expressive mouth and her pink cheeks, that Dan was distracted from the matter in hand. Juliana was a vital, slender, fiery sort of person, to whom things mattered tremendously. Dan, long and lanky, with tousled, bushy light hair and kind, short-sighted blue eyes, was eternally amazed at her vigor.

Dan had a little money, and his sketches and essays and scenarios and poems and articles and one-act plays earned him a little more. He loved writing them, he loved idling about the garden in the wake of one or more busy, flushed, important babies, he loved helping Juliana cook, and puttering with the car and the rabbits and the roses and the gate hinge. Dan liked faded bathing suits, and gipsy suppers on the sands, and second-hand bookstores, and long, dusty, rambling walks up and down unfamiliar lanes.

Left to himself, he would have been as unconscious of the Lessings and the Cruikshanks and the Lees and all the other smart folk who had so suddenly taken possession of the old Point as were the sea gulls on the reef beyond it. They did not come until May, they were gone again in September, there were plenty of woods and beaches left for the Rutherfords to enjoy in peace.

But Juliana was acutely aware of their nearness. Juliana at first had laughed at them and told Dan who their ancestors had been and why they were upstarts, snobs, parvenus, and *nouveaux riches*. Juliana, sweet, joyous, unspoiled little Juliana, had been a Joy of Maryland, and the fact meant something to her. She was aristocrat to her finger tips, whether she was cranking the disobliging old car or putting up the crab apples.

And after a few months the millionaires of the Point found it out, and then Juliana stopped calling them names and they became tremendously important to her. Everything they did interested her, and she had her Grandmother Joy's old sampler framed, and got out two old swords, which she crossed above a tattered gray uniform, over the square piano. She began to give the children an early supper alone—the children, whose spilled bowls and tippy high chairs had been a feature of the Rutherford meals for many happy years!—and she and Dan dined also alone, in state, by candlelight, an hour later, and she began to read fashionable weeklies and to identify an occasional dog-showing or cob-riding woman in them with great excitement.

"For we really do belong to that class," she said once.

"Oh, no we don't, darling, we haven't any money!" Dan said, hungering for the old silly ways of wandering and basket dinners.

"Money, Dan! As if it was only money—"

"What else is it?"

Silence. Then Juliana said with a sort of quiet triumph, and in an undertone, as if to herself: "Then I'd like to know why they're so charming to me. I have no money!"

Now, to Dan's horror, she wanted to give a dinner to some of them. She cited the yellow tablecloth Betsy had brought her from Lyons, the white bowl with yellow marigolds in it and the Quimper candlesticks with yellow candles in them. She alluded to Lizzie's chicken curry, which was really Juliana's chicken curry, served by Lizzie.

There was no dining room in the Rutherfords' rambling little cottage, but there was a small square apartment, half porch, half pantry, where they had their meals when rain drove them from the real porch.

Juliana decided they must make this porch into a sort of sitting room and turn the pleasant old farmhouse parlor into a dining room just for the occasion of the dinner. She kept repeating to Dan the phrase "perfectly informal and simple," but as the days went by somehow the whole thing began to be more and more complicated.

She kept a list; it was always within reach. She conned it worriedly for days. On it she had written, "Mary for beaten biscuit, curtains, Tarcys, curry powder, earring mended, Chinese lanterns, coffee cups."

From time to time she added, in agitated penciling, "powder puffs, salted almonds, mend chair, telephone."

Dan, sympathetically if unintelligently aiding and abetting all her efforts, found the last detail interesting.

"I'm going to ask the operator not to put any calls on from eight o'clock to eleven," Juliana announced capably.

"But darling, nobody ever calls then!"

"Ah, but somebody might, and then we should have Barbe trailing down in her nighty! I declare," mused Juliana, in a

mood of rare honesty, "I declare I despise myself for making a fuss like this! It does seem so—so utterly middle-class, somehow—"

"It'll get the house all cleaned up and shipshape anyway!" Dan assured her helpfully.

"It seems—middle-class," Juliana offered, using a word that to her represented everything undesirable.

"Mother always does this for company," Dan said, innocently pointing the dart, "washing the china, you know, and making coconut cake."

Juliana flushed, partly with shame and partly with resentment. Coconut cake, indeed! She was going to have real *baba*, drenched from a surviving and unregenerate bottle long hidden cellarward.

"I'll tell you a party I liked!" Dan remarked suddenly, from a moment of silence, as he rubbed the old temple candlesticks that he and Juliana had found upon a memorable day of browsing about the lower East Side. "Remember the day it rained so, and we had pans all over the place to catch drips, and we were going to have corn meal mush for lunch, and the Babcocks came in with half a ham and some cherry preserve, and you made the biscuits that puffed up exactly like popovers? Wasn't that an orgy?"

"I never will know what I put in those biscuits," Juliana murmured, momentarily distracted. "We *did* have fun that day," she conceded. "But there is no reason," persisted Juliana, answering perhaps some vague misgivings of her own, as well as Dan's frank distaste for the approaching party, "there is no reason why we shouldn't like the Cruikshanks, the Lees and the Lessings just as well as freaks like the Babcocks!"

"Don't you think money does make a sort of distinction—a sort of caste?" Dan suggested, wondering if there wasn't a good editorial in the idea.

"Not a bit!" Juliana said swiftly. "Look at my cousin Lily. Lily is Mrs. Rosecrans's secretary, she goes everywhere, she buys millions of dollars' worth of stuff and all the shops bow down before her, she speaks six languages and at Christmas they gave her a cottage—a house, if you please, at Westycove—that's what they think of Lily, and she hasn't a cent!"

"But they don't ask her to their dinners, Toots."

"Because she doesn't want to go! You know you hate rich people, Dan," said Juliana, tired and nervous, and with some little feeling, "and you're always different, with them. You're awkward and you're unnatural—you know you are!"

"I know it. They cramp my style!" Dan said humbly. "I think all this is such bunk," he added without venom. "Why can't we have a cold ham and a salad and sit in the garden, if it's a decent evening, and eat at half-past six as we always do, and hand 'em out napkins that don't match and the old Tom and Jerry cups—"

Juliana leaned her head on her hand and rested her elbows on the table where her small supply of silver was spread for polishing.

"My—heavens!" she breathed, patiently. But to Dan's somewhat clumsy apologies she paid no attention; Dan saw that the matter was beyond words.

While he raked and swept out-of-doors, hanging the new lanterns on the porch-sitting room, tying up unruly rose bushes and piling wood neatly, Juliana toiled within. She washed plates, rubbed silver, counted napkins. She cleaned the spare room, where the women guests would presumably lay wraps, and prepared the dressing table for their beautification. She bundled the children's animals and paper dolls and boxes of precious rubbish into a terrible old hall closet that was already overcrowded by winter coats, rubbers, sleds, the sewing machine and the broken rocker, and crammed the sideboard drawer and the closet beneath with all sorts of small odds and ends that must be swept from view: the cribbage board and the playing cards and the children's school books and napkin rings, and the camera and films, her knitting, Dan's other pipe, the thermos bottle, the garden scissors, the gloves she used when weeding, the dominoes, the postal scales, the baby's place tray, an ornamented telephone list and other matters.

"We've simply outgrown this disgraceful place!" Juliana said violently as she toiled. She bought new playing cards, and had Dan mend the card table leg that always stuck, and she had an old Swiss come out from the village two miles away to start the clock that had not run for three years.

Lizzie caught the excitement, and burned one of the napkins and brought the cornice crashing upon her head when it came to hanging the clean curtains. And the children participated excitedly by respectively spilling a bottle of furniture polish



JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

"Dan, if you only—" began Juliana. "—were a gentleman!" she meant to end.

right in the middle of the front porch, whence the oily stain would not be removed, and sitting down on the laundry bundle that contained Daddy's one good dress shirt.

Mary Ann, the middle child, also chose this occasion to fall down and knock out a front first tooth. It wasn't serious, it would presently be replaced and the company wouldn't see the children anyway, but Juliana wept over the scare.

Mary Ann was a vague looking, forlorn little creature anyway, with straight fair hair and alarmed big eyes. She was perfectly well and she was an angel for disposition, but somehow, beside the glowing first-born, Barbe, and the bad, rosy, noisy, dark-curbed baby, Mary Ann seemed somewhat colorless. She was, of course, the father's favorite child, if he had one, and Juliana sometimes told him that he broke the first commandment every time he looked at her.

Dan did his best, but Juliana told herself more than once, in moments of special irritation, that he was no more than a child himself. He could be so wonderful, so resourceful, when his interest was roused! He was like another woman with the children, or with herself, when she was ill. But he was no more than a fumble-fingered boy in such a case as this; he seemed to have no instinct for the finer forms of hospitality.

"These things are important, Danny," she said unsmilingly, when Lizzie, after listening to a long dissertation upon finger bowls, had mildly inquired if she was to pass the sugar with them, and Dan had made the house rock with his mirth. Dan could write brilliant editorials, and he was a darling, thought Juliana, but after all his father was a postmaster in a small town

who called all women "ma'am" or "sister," and his father before him had run a hotel in the same town.

"The salt of the earth!" she would tell herself loyally at this point, but salt, after all, is an unornamental article, and generally unappreciated.

The responses to her prettily written invitations were disappointing, too. Mrs. Lee's secretary answered that Mrs. Lee was away at the moment but would be back in two days. Mrs. Lessing dashed off an illegible note to the effect that she would surely come, but that Mr. Lessing might be detained in town that night, she could not be sure. Mrs. Cruikshank came with her response in person.

She was on her way to the links, and stood, a brilliant young figure, at the gate, in the morning sunshine. Dan had on a corduroy jacket, baggy trousers and Chinese slippers, and was hosing the porch. Juliana was shampooing the glorious mop of Barbe, who was in sketchy underwear for the operation. The baby, in his old coach, had plastered his face irregularly with cracker paste and was now attempting to augment his mid-morning snack with the ear of a plush seal.

"My dear," said Mrs. Cruikshank to the flustered but gracious Juliana, "you're charming to ask me to dinner. But I think I'm a widow! The Storm King doesn't like me a bit any more, and he has gone up to Newport for the golf. I ought to go myself, but I've got mama here—" She paused.

"I wonder if your mother—" Juliana was beginning hospitably, but with a sinking heart, when Mrs. Cruikshank interrupted smoothly.



"No, there are limits. I refuse to play what mama calls bridge with her, and I won't inflict it on my friends. But she doesn't mind my leaving her—Ginger's home, you know," she said of her young daughter. "Only—you see I've got Mr. Noble—that's this old friend of mine from Hawaii, here——" she added doubtfully.

"Bring him by all means!" said Juliana, in another pause.

"Oh, may I? You're awfully nice to say that——"

"Shall I write him?" Juliana's tone did not slacken. But she remembered with a faint inward chill that there had been a rather insipid young man, who looked and danced like a professional dancer, in close attendance upon the beautiful Mrs. Cruikshank at the club last week, and that Mr. Cruikshank, being warmed with his meal, had expressed himself with more honesty than tact about him.

"She's giving that bird-brain a run!" had been his way of putting it, and Juliana remembered now that there was a hint of real resentment in his words.

Mary Cutter, coming down to the Point to show the resentful Lizzie how to make Maryland biscuit, added to her uneasiness.

"They say that Joe Cruikshank told her that if that man didn't get out of the house, he would," said Mary, perhaps slightly chilled because she and Roger were not to be included in this affair. "One of the society weeklies had an article about it, somebody told me. You know that daughter of hers, who lives with her mother, was by her first marriage, and it seems that this girl's father and Joe Cruikshank were old friends——"

"I never heard that," Juliana said more than once, uncomfortably.

"Well, you and Dan do live so out of things! I've always thought it was perfectly ideal," said Mary. Juliana felt a pang. It did all seem so silly, suddenly. "Don't forget cigarettes!"

"Oh, heavens, what kind do you suppose they smoke?"

"I haven't the faintest idea. You know Roger has regular cavemen theories about them! You haven't any of those cutiey boxes and trays that they put down at every place, have you? Of course not. I can lend you some trays when I bring down the spoons and the chutney. You really ought to have the Indian chutney, full of ginger and raisins, but you can't get it now."

"Never again!" said Dan, from the armchair where he was luxuriously cradling Mary Ann and her grazed knee.

"You *have* to do something when people are so kind——"

Juliana protested, for the hundredth time. But when the night

before the dinner party came she said darkly and wearily, in her secret thoughts: "I wish I was dead. It's going to be awful, and I don't care! They'll see that we wanted to do something!"

And so came the heavenly morning of the day itself, a shining morning of sweetness and warmth, with a sun that was not hot, and yet that brought out the fragrance of the lilacs and made the tremulous shade of young leaves delicious over the high green grass of the yard. Dan, over whose recumbent form three children in pajamas were rapturously climbing, commented enthusiastically upon the weather, from his bed.

"I wish it was tomorrow—and pouring!" Juliana said darkly, brushing her long hair. "It'll all be over by this time tomorrow, anyway," she consoled herself as she went downstairs.

She was greeted by an unset table and breakfast preparations obviously late.

"I feel like death," said Lizzie, sitting heavily by the kitchen table. "You'd never believe the strength of the weakness that come over me like a sending——"

Juliana paid no attention. It was one of many prods that ruffled her soul as the morning wore on. For one thing, the telephone operator was very breezy when Juliana telephoned to the grocer, at twelve, incidentally to say that she had wanted cornstarch, not laundry starch.



JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

"My little sweetheart!" Dan had her in his arms. Mary Ann sniffled, sighed, gulped and was content.

"I thought you didn't want any calls after eight o'clock today," said the operator capably.

"Tonight!" Juliana corrected, her heart sinking.

"Well, there was a party from the city trying to get you all morning," the operator said. "I thought you says—"

Juliana hung up, exasperated beyond utterance. The "party from the city" might easily be Mrs. Lee, saying that they positively would, or positively would not, come. The question of what Barbe called "biggening or smallening" the table was important.

Another prod was the arrival of the village real estate man, who had received, it seemed, one more good offer for the

Rutherford place. There was a "party that was interested." it appeared.

This was always an annoyance to Dan and a source of real fear and misery to Juliana. It was not only that she had associations with the place, for Juliana, like most American women, could always strike new roots cheerfully and move on to the unknown with great interest, but she suspected that this "interested party" was one of her neighbors, was Dunham Lee or Ross Lessing, who both would have liked this particular strip for garage space or for a tennis court.

It was disheartening to have these apparently friendly persons trying to squeeze the Rutherfords from their foothold, yet both Dan and Juliana suspected that that was exactly what was going on. The whole homestead had cost them less than five thousand dollars; the "interested party" offered fifteen. Dan, who had for some time had his fond eye upon a bit of wooded headland in an obscure village some forty miles farther north, would long ago have accepted this Arabian Nights offer and gone upon his placid way, to reestablish the baby coach and the shabby books and the brass firedogs elsewhere. But the home was Juliana's, and Juliana never wavered. They shouldn't crowd her out, she would say. On the contrary, she would win them, one by one, and find herself snugly established here in their

exclusive midst, one of themselves, although her house was not as big as their garages and her income not what many of them paid their secretaries.

But it was especially hard to have the agent reappear today. Today, when his supposed clients were actually to be the Rutherfords' guests at dinner. His offer this morning was of seventeen thousand five hundred dollars. The "party" was a rich city man, he said vaguely, his name was Wilson—that was it, Wilson.

"I don't see why he wants to buy it without ever seeing it!" Juliana, baffled, protested uneasily.

"Well, it's a very nice piece," said Mr. Tautphaus judicially.

"Yes, but he couldn't use the (Continued on page 112)

ALBERT PAYSON TERHUNE

writes on Joys and Dangers

Now That I'm FIFTY

LOOKING back over this series, I wonder if I have given the impression that being fifty years old is something like being in jail or on a desert island. If so, I've written clumsily.

There are glorious compensations for Fifty.

Let me try to explain one or two of the hundred advantages, now that I have whined about a few of the drawbacks.

At Fifty, I stand on a high hilltop. Ahead, it is true, are other and higher hills before I shall reach the jumping-off place—the summit whence the next step must be a flight.

But I am high enough to get a painfully clear view of the long road behind me; the road I have ascended, so painfully; the road that winds its rough and streaky way up from the start of the climb.

You youngsters would be amazed to see how different the road looks from this end. Why, it isn't the same road at all as it was when I used to look upward along it, instead of looking back!

If I had it to retravel I should make so much better and happier progress—if I didn't chance to stub my silly toe on some obstacle which I skirted by merest luck on the first climb!

The obstructions and the pits and the dragons which I faced and feared on the ascent turn out to have been laughably harmless. Look at a few of them:

There, for example, is the Black Hole of Eternal Disgrace; back near the milestone that is numbered 20. That was the gaping maw which was to swallow me forever if I did not study hard enough to get my degree of A. B. in college.

From childhood I had been made to think that I must either go triumphantly through college or be eternally shamed. It was a horror to me; as it is and has been and shall be to a million more.

Looking back, I see that that yawning Black Hole was a pin point. I couldn't have been plunged into it if I had wanted to. It wasn't big enough to engulf a gnat.

If I had failed in every examination in all my jolly college course—if I had been expelled for pulling the dean's wool-trust whiskers—I'd be not a penny the worse off today; or the less liked and respected by the folk who now are my companions and associates.

Life would have gone on just the same. I see that now. If I had had the wit to see it then I'd have saved myself many a sleepless night and many a half formed plan to run away and enlist in the army.

Why, I don't even know what has become of my longed for college diploma! Probably it has been lost in our various movings. Yet once I would have bartered both legs to acquire the worthless fetish.

Then, a bit farther on in the climb, stretches the Slough of Despair. I thought I should never emerge from that. Looking back, I see the fearsome thing is a six inch mud puddle.

I was hurled to its supposedly bottomless depths by a Girl. She swore she would love me forever; and that she'd wait a lifetime, if need be, for me to earn enough to marry on.

Then, very sensibly, she married for vast wealth an old, old man (he must have been nearly thirty-five) who was junior partner in a dry goods store in Brooklyn. And my heart was irremediably broken.

I was a blighted being. I remember I went so far as to commit to memory a Byron poem containing the line: "*And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly live on.*" Always I hoped for a chance to recite it to her; with my arms folded and with a Guy Livingstone glower on my face. I never got the chance.

The only time I saw her again was on a train—some three years ago. And by then I had forgotten the poem: She must have weighed as much as I do, that last time I saw her; though once my two hands could span her waist.

She wore spectacles, perspired generously and whistled through her nose—three years ago. And when she recalled herself to my memory I got her mixed up with someone else.

Yet in my early twenties my one ideal of a happy evening was to have her weep over my deathbed.

Then, there in my backward survey of the road, I see the Impassable Barrier that rose in front of me and hemmed me in. That Barrier was the loss of a job which appeared to have my whole future bound up with it. It meant an entire reshaping of my work-life; and a dull certainty that my one chance for success was forever gone.

The man who succeeded to my lost job is now drawing down the princely salary of seventy dollars a week; with every prospect of being laid off for old age in a few years. It was the loss of that job which first started me to working in earnest.

Yes, the Impassable Barrier, seen from the right perspective, was only a bit of tough climb which taught me to use my climbing muscles.

Then there was the man who sent me word he would "get" me. One evening as I was taking a walk a pistol bullet dug a nasty hole in a wooden doorpost, scarce a foot away from my silly head.

That was almost a quarter-century ago. Yet for fully a year thereafter I used to be pestered with a feeling that the man was hidden somewhere along my line of walk. I had not the sense to realize that threatened men live long; and that—once having missed me—the poor bungler was not likely to scrape up courage for a second shot. I was no longer in peril. As usual, my worry was wasted.

And so on through the rest of the myriad holes and ridges in the road—holes and ridges which spelled Tragedy; and which, at Fifty, I can smile at. But it is a kindly smile, with nothing of derision in it.

And there are innumerable other men and maids plodding dispiritedly or hopefully along that same deceptively easy road—men and maids to whom I yearn to shout:

"That dragon is only an angleworm. He can't devour you! That yawning chasm isn't six inches wide. Stop trembling and wringing your hands, and step across it! The Slough of Despond hasn't enough black mud in it to stain the soles of your shrinking feet."

But my voice will not carry. And each must tread the road, scared by the same harmless bugaboos that scared me.

I'm sorry for them all. But I am smugly glad for myself. That is one of the joys of Fifty.

Then I look ahead to the mountains yet above me—the hills I must climb before I can reach the Topmost Ledge.

When at last my tired feet shall press that Ledge, or spring joyously forth into space, shall I look back toward the fiftieth milestone and smile amusedly at sight of the dangers that now I dread? I wonder! Why doesn't some *really* old man—say, someone in the nineties—tell me?

Back along the road, from childhood to fifty, I watch and classify the obstacles that strew the route—the perils, the menaces. And this queer bit of memory comes to me:

Nine-tenths of those obstructions and dangers that I used to worry about never came my way at all. Lord, the worry I could have saved myself if I'd known that beforehand!

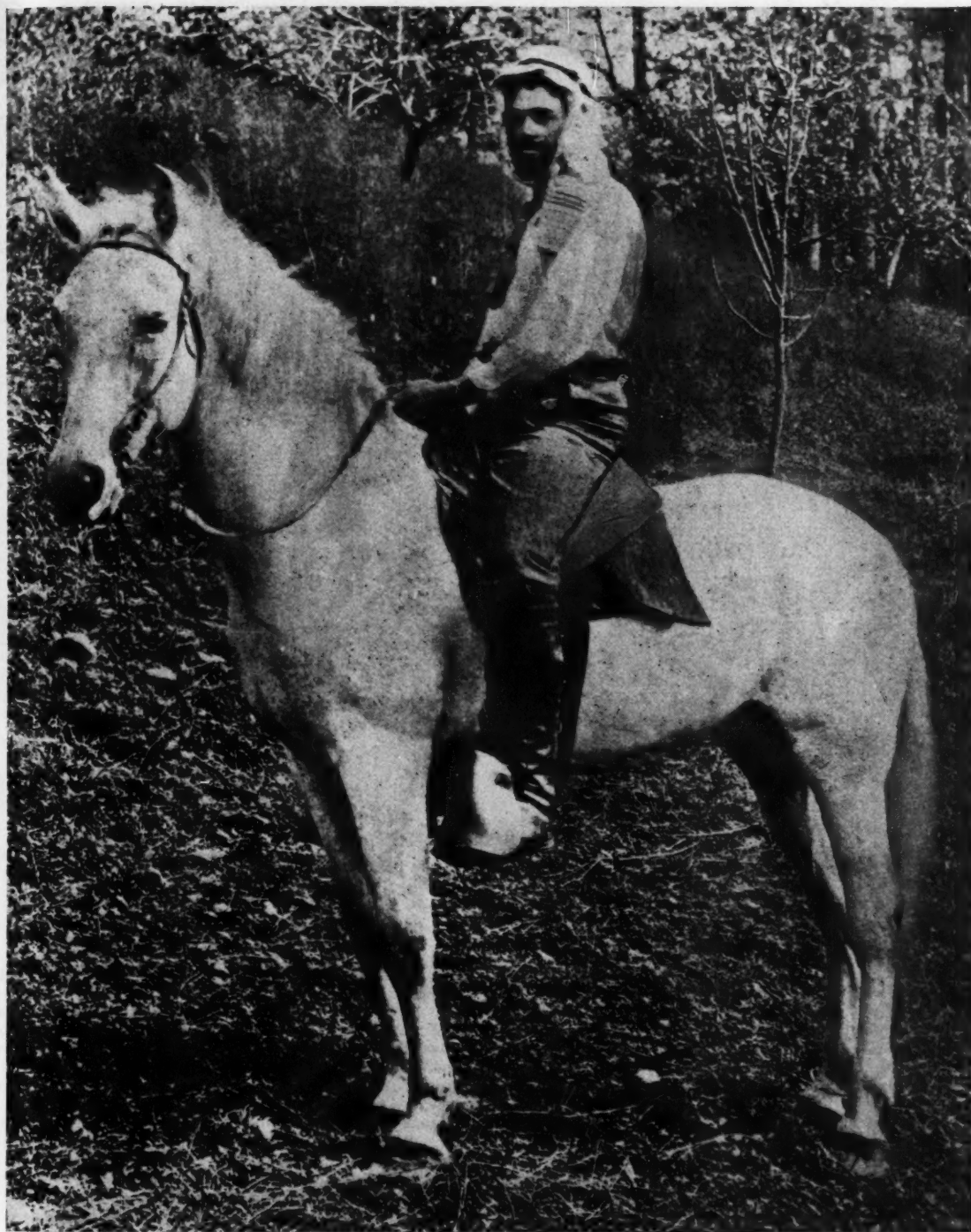
The air, here on the breezy uplands of Fifty, is bracing and pleasant to breathe. The sun shines caressingly, and with little of the intolerant fierce heat of earlier days. Here, too, is kindly and wise and gentle companionship. It is well to be here.

This is the true Indian Summer of life. Behind lies the tender and fickle Springtime. Behind lies the glowingly burning heat and throb of July and August.

Ahead, of course, are the chill rot and grayness of late November; and the awesome white chill of Winter.

But the Indian Summer of Fifty is glorious; if one has the sense to appreciate it and to revel in its loveliness.

Let's enjoy it, shan't we? And let's try to pity and not envy those behind us who are still scorching in the midsummer heat. It surely ought to be easy to pity and not envy them, since they set us the example.



How I Felt When This Picture Was Taken

I was twenty-one. I had raised a really successful beard, which made me look almost twenty-two. I was free from college, and across the globe. With a good little Syrian stallion under me and a leaky tent to sleep in, I was crossing the Syrian wilderness. In brief, I was discovering a new world.

Perhaps I shall feel as gloriously self-important and heroic again some day. But not until my fellow humans make me Dictator of the Universe, and Rockefeller and Rothschild turn over their fortunes to me. Even then I shall not be twenty-one; which was worth all the rest put together.



"There's a quick word," said Crisp, "a blow from behind—"

The Hunch-Player

YOU know what the fancy call a hunch-player? Well, that was what Crisp of the Star was. Through all the days of his life on a city desk consistently he played two chronic hunches. He believed in going after the seemingly impossible, and he believed that the little apples in the bottom of the barrel sometimes yield the juiciest bites.

Let me explain: There once upon a time was a man in this town of New York whose name was a household word between coast and coast. But his personality was a sealed book throughout this widened range. In banking he was a sky-raking figure; on the private side he was a cipher. He was a whole row of ciphers. Everybody knew what he did. Just nobody, outside his own immediate circle, knew what he was. He moved in a mysterious way his wonders to perform, and for all he cared the public might go and hang itself and its inquisitiveness from the same limb.

He had never made utterances for publication; he had never given out statements for print. He was reported to boast that so long as he lived he would never do either one. If the press chose to misrepresent him, let it. If it chose to quote him at secondhand he would not take the trouble to deny or affirm or qualify the accuracy of the words attributed to him. The fabled pioneer who lived so far back in the woods that the owls mated with his chickens was not so inaccessible, so aloof, as this man, with his town house on the Avenue and his office in Wall Street and his thumb in every desirable plum pie that the leading Jack Horners of the money markets could cook up. So accordingly Crisp detailed one of the best men he had to call every Friday morning at ten o'clock and ask, on behalf of the Star, for a special interview. This was kept up for two years.

"Never mind, Larry," Crisp would say when the reporter, returning to the city room, would confess another failure on the

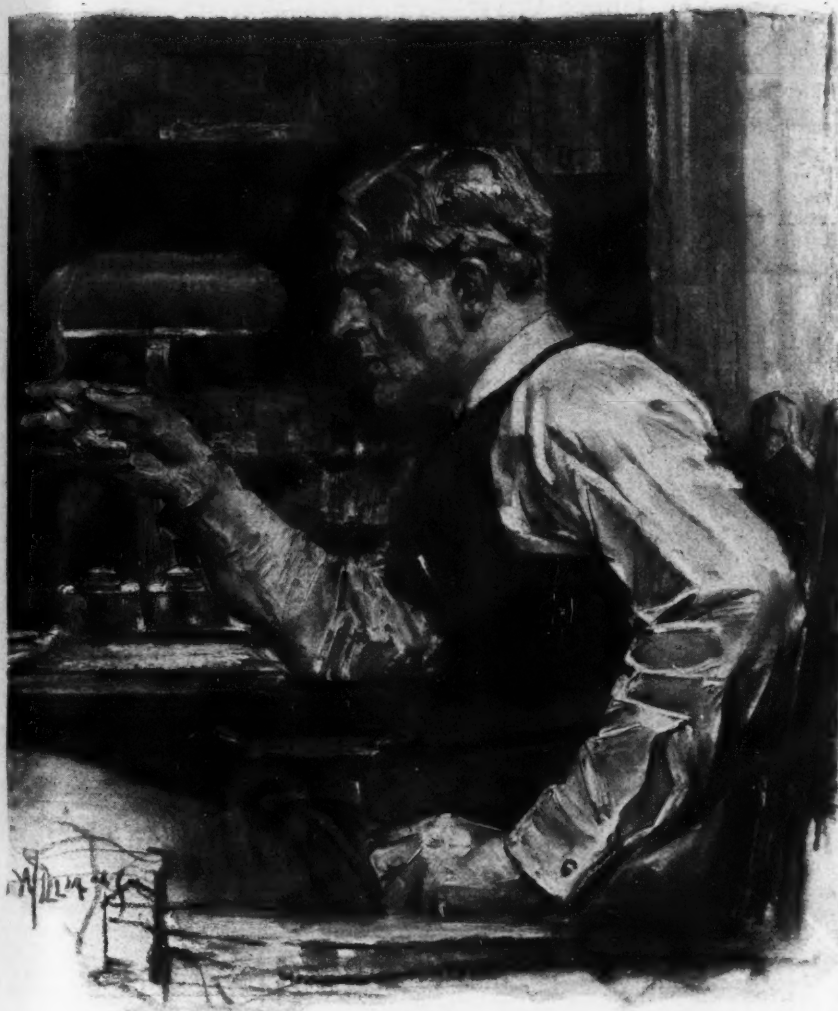
assignment. "Just make a note to drop in again next Friday at the regular hour and send your card in. You know that saying about the constant drop of water wearing away the hardest stone? All right, bear it in mind. Some of these days you're going to break down his powers of resistance. Or he'll develop a gnawing curiosity to see what such a persistent idiot as you must appear to him to be, really looks like. Or the day will come when he's ready to break silence, and then you'll be the one newspaperman he'll think of, because your name will be the one that's most familiar to him. Or something. And if the old Sphinx ever does uncork himself—I mean when he does, not if—he'll rock the Pyramids. And, Larry, oh my son, we'll be there when the rocking starts!"

It came to pass on a Friday morning in the beginning of the third year that the inscrutable one ceased to be inscrutable. He just naturally hauled off and unrolled himself like a scroll. What he said about finance and the science of finance and the politics of it and the domestic and international aspects of it, giving names and dates, book, chapter and verse, shook both hemispheres. Like the tail of the snake which doesn't die till the sun goes down, the last faint tremors begotten of that interview were still being felt in the farther corners of this earth long after the Star had ceased to halo itself for its epochal beat.

This, by illustration, was how Crisp played one of his favorite hunches. Here was how he played the other one: If ever you have seen a trained newspaperman running through a paper you know the way he does it even though you may not be able to imitate him. His eye goes hurrying down the sheet, column by column, picking up now a name or a word, there a phrase or a sentence, and when, in an amazingly short time, he has finished with that page and turned to the next one he has in his brain a pretty fair compilation of the outstanding facts—the details

*Another
Excellent
Mystery
Story*
By
**Irvin
S.
Cobb**

Illustrations by
C. D. Williams



covered and the details not as yet fully covered and so deserving of further consideration.

It is quite a knack and one not come by without practice. Crisp had the performance of it well mastered but he went further than some news editors go. He gave a special heed to those small oddments and ends of news that were tucked down at the ends of the columns and shoved off at the sides in the out-of-the-way corners where the unclassified ads occurred.

About once in so often he would slow up and stop and back up to re-read some seemingly trivial paragraph which the make-up man had used as a footstone for a story of admitted importance. Probably, then, he would cut it out and call to him a reporter in whose abilities as a sapper and miner of buried news values he had confidence.

"Here, son," he would say, "scout out on this, will you? I may be wrong but it looks to me as though you might dig up a story out of this little thing. Just go to the address that's given here and ask this woman why, when the flat caught fire, she let her piano burn up and saved the stuffed parrot? I've got a sort of a notion in the back part of my head that maybe your time won't be entirely wasted."

Or, as in the well remembered instance of the Prospect Slope mystery, so called, there was Crisp, rolling in his fingers a clipping from his own paper and saying to Cullinan, his star reporter of that particular period:

"Cully, I'm not altogether satisfied with the way the cops over in Brooklyn and the newspapers on this side of the River are handling this Holloway story. I'm not so blamed well satisfied with the way we've handled it ourselves, in this shop. It begins to look to me as though we've all been overlooking a good bet."

"I think my story will stack up alongside any other evening paper in town's story," said Cullinan, so deeply stung in his

professional quick that he trod heavily upon the rules of grammar—not that Cully cared for that. Being an average good reporter, he respected the rules of grammar not a bit in his speech and not any too much in his writings, but stamped them underfoot at will.

What Cullinan, the master hand, did care about was the implied suggestion that he might have shirked the job.

Crisp hastened to soothe him:

"Don't misunderstand me. I'm not complaining of your work. It's your frame of mind I'm thinking of. The mistake you've made—and the one that I've made, too, for that matter—is following the line of least resistance, the same as the detective force has been doing ever since the start. Well, it's only natural for people to think in a groove. There's a good deal of the sheep in the composition of most of us—it's instinct for us to trail along after a leader. But so far as the Star is concerned I've decided that we'd better be nosing out on a fresh track for a little while and see what it gets us."

"Here's what I want you to do this morning: Let Sheridan and Cope cover the main police ends and you get busy and find out exactly what this young fellow Holloway's salary was with the Kings Trust Company. Find out, if you can, whether he'd been living past his means—whether there's any chance of our showing that he might have been short in his accounts with those trust company people. Find out, some way or other, how much life insurance he carried, and, above all things, you learn whether he'd taken out any large policies on his life within the past year or the past two years."

"All right, sir, just as you say, but you've got me dizzy—I've got to own up to that. The way I look at it—the only way you can look at it—this thing is just a dead open-and-shut case of murder and you're beginning to talk as though—"

Crisp jumped at him with a question before he could finish:

"What makes you so sure it's murder?"

"Why, boss, what else could it be? Here's young Holloway coming home late and finding his wife in bed. He's getting undressed to turn in when he says to her he thinks he hears curious noises downstairs. He takes his gun out of the bureau drawer where he keeps it, and without making any light goes slipping downstairs to investigate. He tells his wife to stay where she is—that probably there's nothing wrong but he only wants to make sure, that's all. Well, he goes on down, and in about a minute more she hears him call out from there and then she hears a shot, and with that she screams and faints away."

"But the neighbor next door, this Mr. J. P. Gatewood, happens to be awake and of course he hears the shot, too. And so he jumps up and pulls on a few clothes and runs across lots and he finds the front door of the Holloway house open and he bulges in and turns on the lights. And there's young Holloway dead on the dining room floor with a bullet in his heart—shot at close range—and his pet fox terrier that must have followed him downstairs from the bedroom, is standing over him, whimpering."

"Holloway's pistol, a thirty-eight caliber, is on the floor alongside him—it hasn't been fired. The gun that did kill him—an old-fashioned Colt's, forty-two caliber—is there, too, where the murderer must have dropped it as he whirled to run. And on the dining room table, all done up in a tablecloth, is most of the silverware, showing that Holloway must have slipped up on the robber and surprised him while he was tying up the swag. And on the carpet there are plenty of muddy tracks, and outside on the porch and still farther out on the lawn are more tracks that correspond with these—two sets of 'em—one set showing where somebody with a big number eleven shoe crept up to the house at a crawl almost and got in by the front door, and the other set, going away, with the prints farther apart, to show where the same party that wore those shoes beat it away from there as fast as he could travel."

"How are you going to get away from that strange pistol? Or from those strange footprints? What else could it be but a plain open-and-shut case of murder by a housebreaker—even if the police haven't been able to find the man that did it yet?"

"Cully," said Crisp, droning his words, "let's suppose a few things. Let's suppose that Holloway, on a salary of not exceeding six thousand a year—probably not more than five—was living at the rate of fifteen or twenty thousand a year. As a matter of fact, we don't have to suppose that part of it very hard—we know he lived in an expensive neighborhood in a rented house and kept four servants and belonged to two country clubs and ran with a fast set. Let's suppose that he's been spending money that wasn't his—trust company money. Let's suppose that he's desperate—that he makes up his mind to take a short cut out of the mess by the suicide route; that he's been thinking of doing it for some time past. But he wants to leave his wife provided for. So he insures his life—remember, I'm still supposing—insures his life for enough money to square up his accounts and still leave plenty for her to live on."

"But then he finds out the policies have the regular clauses in them—like most life insurance policies do—voiding the payments if the holder kills himself by deliberate intent inside of one year or two or three from the date of issue. So he rigs up a plant to throw dust in the eyes of his wife and the police and the insurance people and everybody."

"He stays out on a certain night until he knows she's in bed. Then he sneaks in, bringing with him an extra pistol and a pair of secondhand shoes big enough to slip 'em on over his own shoes. Working in the dark, he makes those sets of duplicate tracks, going and coming, and then hides that pair of number elevens where they won't be found. He rolls up the silver in a bundle—all a part of his plan to make the burglar theory seem more plausible. He puts the Colt's where he can find it without any trouble. He leaves the front door open. Then he goes upstairs, starts to take off his clothes, pretends to hear suspicious noises downstairs, tells his wife, who's sleepy, that he's going to investigate, takes his own gun in his hand, goes back down, shoots himself through the heart with the strange gun—and there you are. What do you think of that for a job of ground-and-lofty supposing?"

"Sounds like a good side slant to take if we want to smoke up the story and keep it on the front page a few days longer," said Cullinan, speaking, against his will, admiringly. "But, while we're supposing, let's suppose it turned out that taking that viewpoint was wrong. I don't know whether, under the laws of this State, you can libel a dead man, but it would be a rotten

thing to do to a dead man's memory and to his widow, wouldn't it, boss—if they caught the murderer, say?"

"It certainly would," said Crisp dryly. "We'd have to have our deductions pretty well proved up before we sprung 'em. That's why I'm detailing you to look up Holloway's private business affairs today."

"Just as you say," said Cullinan, "but would you mind telling me, boss, who was it that started you off on this new slant?"

"You—you're the man."

"Me!"

It wasn't a question; it was an exclamation.

"Yes, you—in a line or two you had in your story on the first day. I came across it last night when I was checking up the Star's stories with the Courier's and the Evening Dispatch's to see how our work on it compared with theirs; that's a little habit of mine you didn't know I had, did you? What I don't understand is how I missed the point on the day we printed it. You remember that talk you had with Gatewood, the neighbor, the morning you got the assignment, don't you?"

"Of course."

"Remember what he said about Holloway's dog?"

"Holloway's dog?" echoed Cullinan blankly.

"Yes. Gatewood told you—or so you quoted him as saying—that the first he knew of the killing was when he heard the shot fired, although at the time he was wide awake."

"Yes, that's right," assented the puzzled reporter.

"And that when he got there the dog was standing over Holloway's body whining—he said that, too, didn't he?"

"Certainly he did, but what—"

"Cully," snapped Crisp, "do you own a dog, now?"

"No, sir."

"Did you ever own a dog?"

"As a boy—yes, sir."

"Was it a fox terrier?"

"It was part terrier, I think—and part cur. I called him Grip."

"Well, suppose you'd heard suspicious noises in your own house when you owned Grip and you'd gone downstairs to investigate, taking Grip with you? And suppose in the darkness you'd run into a prowler—a stranger? Wouldn't the cur part of Grip have started him growling as soon as he caught a whiff of that intruder and wouldn't the terrier part of Grip have set him to barking at the same time? Grip might have licked your hand and whimpered after you'd been shot, but before that happened—I leave it to you—wouldn't he have been yelping so's everybody on the block could hear him? People can dissemble and play tricks on one another but under any given set of imaginable circumstances you can't keep a dog from doing the dependable and the inevitable thing. Even associating with mankind doesn't keep a dog from being natural and honest—and that's saying a good deal for the dog. Think it over, Cully, my son, think it over—but first get busy on this lead I'm handing you."

"Boss," said Cully worshipfully, "by gosh, you might be right at that! I remember Grip's ways." He clutched for his hat and overcoat. "Anyhow, I'm on my way."

And, as it turned out, the boss was right, and when on the next day after this the Star clouded the rest of the Row between the eyes with a gorgeous exclusive, was a prophet not without honor in his own country.

It was startling—the number of times in the course of a year that the Star came through with a good human interest yarn—humorous or pathetic or dramatic—as a result of some such obscured beginning. The members of Crisp's staff, who idolized him professionally, and in their private capacities sometimes hated him, had an even stronger word for it. They said it was incredible. They said it was as though old Ben Alibi every now and then developed the gift of second sight. They likened his talent to the talent of a smart rat that can smell out a hidden rat behind a wainscoting where dogs with only ordinarily keen noses catch no betraying scent. These may not have been exactly the words they used in describing the phenomenon, but this was their purport.

It would have astonished them in a fresh place if anybody had told them that this persistent phase of their chief's hunch-playing was based on a profound private superstition. For he neither looked nor deported himself after the fashion of one who believed in signs and portents; he seemed so absolutely materialistic. They would have marveled, I guess, to know that in a small flapped compartment of his pocket cardcase he carried a fetish. It was a raggedy and faded scrap of news print stock—a twelve line clipping from a newspaper that went out of business



"I leave it to you—wouldn't that dog have been yelping so's everybody on the block could hear him?"

before the panic of 1907. From age and rubbing, the type lines were scarcely to be read. And if you did succeed in reading them, their meaning seemed inconsequential and incidental to the bygone event upon which they bore.

But Crisp treasured the frayed scrap as though it had been a jewel of price. It was to him a reminder of his first notable beat after he came in off the street to take the city desk of the newly established Daily Star. It was more than a reminder. It was a charm and a token. Proof and promise of the value of a hunch; that's what it was to him.

At the time—and that time is far back of the time of this present writing—the Trask case made a big stir in New York, what with the killing first and then the arrest and the confession and the trial and all. The story broke late one steamy August night, barely allowing for the morning papers to throw together short front page stories for their late city editions. Briefly, the outstanding facts were these:

John Q. A. Trask was a middle-aged person of independent means, one fairly conspicuous in certain gentlemanly activities suitable to a person of his station and leisure. He was an amateur yachtsman, an owner of race horses, a card player who didn't much care how large the stakes might be, a member of several clubs, a patron of the sports. Summing up in a short line, you might have classified him as a typical man-about-town; he came as near to filling the qualifications for that rather vague indexing as any man you might have named. He lived in the expensive and supposedly exclusive Lathrop Arms apartments

on Twenty-eighth Street between Fifth and Madison Avenues. Twenty years ago Twenty-eighth Street was not so far uptown for general purposes, neither was it so far down for high-priced apartment hotels as it is today. It was very much in the middle of things, and this Mr. John Q. A. Trask was perhaps the most widely known of its bachelor tenants.

It was in the doorway of the Lathrop Arms that somebody brained him on that hot night of midsummer. It would seem that he last was seen alive when he left the Cosmos Club in Madison Square at or about eleven forty-five o'clock. The doorman at the Cosmos was able to fix the time fairly accurately. He remembered that he offered to call a cab for the departing member but Mr. Trask told him that he meant to walk home. He was alone then. Presumably, he still was alone when he came to where he lived; it must have been a very few minutes past midnight when he got there. It was at twelve o'clock that the hall attendant at the Lathrop Arms closed the elevator, set the night latch on the street door, extinguished all the lights in the first floor foyer, excepting one near the staircase, and went to his bed in the basement; all this in accord with the regular routine.

Outside in the gloom of the pillared entry Mr. Trask must have been in the act of slipping his pass-key in the keyhole when the assassin struck him down, probably from behind. Later the key was picked up from the tiled floor of the entryway where it had been dropped. Ten feet away on the sidewalk was found, at the same time, the weapon with which the man had

The Hunch-Player

been killed. It was a piece of gas pipe, common gas pipe, brutally heavy and yet most handy; it could be carried, hidden, under a coat or up a sleeve or down a trouser leg. With it the victim's head had been crushed in.

In all likelihood the first blow, crashing through his straw hat, was the blow that killed him. He must have gone down without crying out or any struggling, barring perhaps the spasmodic twitchings of a lusty creature suddenly stricken. But the assailant had not been content to deliver the one lethal stroke; no expert's aid was needed for the reconstruction of the scene. Bending over the felled shape, the murderer had continued to swing his gas pipe, striking again and again, making scrap of the victim's skull.

The finding of the key and the pipe-length and the piecing together of the action of the crime, belonged, though, among the subsequent developments; these were details uncovering in swift order following upon the discovery of the body. A private policeman brought the word of that to a regular policeman. The former, in his gray uniform, came running, all out of breath, to pant out the news to his blue-coated professional brother, Officer Oscar Lieber, when Lieber was walking his post in Madison Avenue just around the corner from the spot where the thing occurred. The men knew each other; their official duties brought them together nightly. They had met on their rounds and had chatted briefly and had parted at a point two blocks distant, less than an hour before. These two immediately became outstanding figures in the early phases of the investigation. Indeed, then and thereafter they were the only persons who might in any sense be called witnesses as regards the main event, and even in their case the term must be used in a qualified sense.

The private policeman, by name Jerome T. Sweeney, was in the employ of the Hoster Patrol and Watch Service, a responsible concern and one favorably known to the authorities and to housekeepers generally. His beat included the block where the Lathrop Arms stood. His story of the finding of the body was, substantially, as follows:

He was going along the north side of Twenty-eighth Street trying doors. The street was quiet and, except for him, apparently deserted. From the time he swung into it coming east out of Fifth Avenue he had seen no other pedestrian whatsoever. Reaching the Lathrop Arms he turned in off the sidewalk to make sure the street door properly was fastened. He stumbled over something. He pressed the button of his electric flash and by its light saw at his feet the sprawled figure of a well dressed man, the head terribly battered. He stooped and felt for signs of life and the touch of his hands confirmed what already his eyes had told him. So he ran around into Madison Avenue, seeking assistance there, and he found Lieber and brought Lieber back with him.

In handling the body both men got blood upon their hands; they had the wit about them, though, not to shift it materially from where it lay, twisted on its side. They did convince

themselves that death had taken place within the past fifteen minutes. In so far as their first hurried examination tended to show, robbery had not been the motive behind the thing, for on the person of the dead man they found a gold watch and a bill folder containing a considerable amount of money; much loose silver and a gold piece or so were in one of his trouser pockets. In all of these minor points the two men, at the inquest, confirmed and corroborated each other; their statements under oath touching on the state of things matched and dovetailed.

After some difficulty they succeeded in awaking the hall attendant, who had fallen soundly asleep, although by his own account he had been in bed but a short while. The shocked attendant, a West Indian negro, identified the victim. About his behavior there was nothing suspicious but, putting himself on the safe side, Lieber detained him, as the police term is. When in doubt, arrest somebody; when in great doubt, arrest that somebody very promptly—this is a dependable axiom of the uniformed force, and always has been.

So, at breakfast time that day, the matter stood. So all day it continued to stand. The trouble with this story was that it didn't keep growing. There was no progress to it, no development, no cumulation; and any playwright will tell you that these are defects fatal to a dramatic piece.

Now, the newspaper game, on a larger scale merely is the play-writing game and subject to much the same rules, the main distinction being that in a print shop a new

show must be put on each day with different scenery and its own special cast. No run lasts for longer than twenty-four hours and usually it doesn't last that long even. You must keep bringing in fresh scenes and fresh characters or the interest lags. It is all very well to lift your curtain with a tragedy, but it is altogether bad if the first act climax is the only climax you have to offer to your audience.

This last, exactly, was what ailed the Trask story. It began promisingly—this dilettante sportsman sauntering homeward from his club through the silent guarded streets, his white straw hat a pale blur in the half darkness, his dinner coat a black patch below it; his feet ringing briskly on the paving, his head up; seemingly a man at peace with a peaceful world, certainly a man without known bitter enemies—and then of a sudden attacked at the very threshold, bludgeoned out of all wholesome semblance and left on his own doorsteps a pitifully, sadly marred huddle of dead flesh. That you will allow, is a promising beginning for any news story. It calls for front page spreads; is a thing to be played up with picture layouts and garnished with the strong adjectives of modern journalism. But it stopped as it began—with abruptness.

The newspapers could ask questions but neither they nor the police were able to supply the answers. Assuming, for the sake of argument, that a footpad killed Trask, why did he fail to strip the body of its valuables? He had abundant time in which to hammer Trask's head out of shape. What then was the reason, presuming the slayer to be a common marauder, that he did not



"The girl's brother is not the kind who forgives."

take the time to collect the loot which would be his reward? If jealousy, if some hidden grudge, if a quarrel for a woman's favor was the motive, it then became inconceivable to imagine any man of Trask's class adopting the methods of a highwayman. If a wandering maniac had assaulted the clubman, what had become of him? Why had no one seen him lurking about the neighborhood earlier in the evening? Why had no one seen him departing out of it after he finished his ghastly gas pipe job? Lacking facts, the newspapers for the most part ran the scales on the lunatic theory.

Along Park Row smart things were looked for from Crisp, the youngest city editor on it. The Star was a new paper then—Wendover recently had founded it and was putting scads of money in it to make it go—and Crisp only three weeks before had been brought over from the Intelligencer, at a big salary for those days, to run its city room. So, naturally, he was expected to rise to this opportunity, to give the Trask story some twist which sensationally would quicken it even though the effect might mean only talk on the street and added circulation through a few editions.

He did nothing of the sort. Wiseacres in certain rival shops, not to mention those in his own shop, said it was the old story—spoiling a cracking good reporter to make a commonplace city editor. Well, nearly always, didn't it turn out just that way? Somehow, when they quit using their legs they quit using their noodles, too; funny, wasn't it? And what was it Pulitzer had said once about every reporter being a hope and every editor a disappointment? So forth and so on.

If to Crisp's ears came any echo of this dismal litany from the official Jobs and Jeremiahs of the Row, where pessimism was a calling in life rather than a temperamental aspect, and where they pretended to be sorry for you when really they were glad you had failed, and where the art of envy rose to great heights and was a real and a finished art, he gave no sign that he knew what the anthem singers might be singing. He applied no artificial stimulant to the story; his journalistic pulmotor, which fancy would have painted a rich chrome yellow, apparently was out of order. He seemed content to let the yarn run its course in the conventional channels.

True, he sent Sheridan, who was one of his best, up to the Massachusetts town where Trask had been born, presumably with orders to dig into Trask's earlier life, but whatever it may have been that Sheridan found out, Crisp saw fit not to print it. Also he detailed Olson, a first rate assignment man, to do a feature on the personalities of Lieber, the policeman, and Sweeney, the private patrolman. He went to unusual pains in this matter. Olson was instructed to get all possible facts touching on the professional and private records of these two—when Lieber had joined the force, for example, and when Sweeney had secured employment with the Hoster Patrol and Watch Service, and what, if any, the latter's prior experience had been as an officer, and where both men were born and what families they had and where they lived; an exhaustive inquiry, you would have said, considering that the pair appeared to be rather a commonplace and uninteresting pair. When Olson brought them down to the Star's office to pose for illustrations for the yarn, Crisp made a journey up to the staff photographers' department on the roof and met both the men and chatted with them.

But the effects hardly seemed to justify the efforts. The thing had been done before and, reading Olson's stuff in the

galley proofs, the critics inside the Star shop told one another that also it had been better done. For that matter, unless he resorted to fiction, there really was nothing particularly exciting Olson might have said of his two subjects in hand. The critics agreed that the fault for the fall-down was not the reporter's. They voted unanimously to put the blame on the shoulders of the man who had set him to the task.

Moreover, having got the special into type, Crisp failed to run it; he margined it "Hold." Promptly on this the elder statesmen went into executive session again and took their knocking tools with them. Was it possible that so soon after his elevation to an executive post this bumptious young squirt of a Crisp was



"Trask goes away from that town. Shame or fright causes him to leave."

losing the sense of proportion which had marked him as a reporter? Wasting all this time and trouble on a feature spread that failed utterly to pan out? Well, anyhow, there you were; the thing spoke for itself. There was, they argued, no more to be said, meaning that there was a great deal more to be said. Cockburn, whom Crisp had succeeded on the city desk, led the anvil chorus, swinging a wicked sledge. Cockburn was on exchanges now and feeling low and miasmic in his mind.

As for Crisp, he suffered the Trask story to languish and shrink until its rehashed dimensions fitted inside a second page column and, jibing off on a fresh tack, he concentrated on the traction graft scandal, which was a dependable and popular hardy annual, giving to it the favored places in his make-ups. For a week he followed where this bent took him, and the other thing grew staler by the minute. Then one bright morning he experienced a change in judgment.

It would appear that all of a sudden his shifting fancy inclined him to re-oxygenize the now almost moribund Trask story. He sent Olson to ask Lieber and Sweeney, the two chief witnesses in that diminishing mystery, to call at the Star building in the afternoon at three; his message was that he desired their personal approval for what had been said about them in Olson's held over special. Seemingly a mania for accuracy in small things was besetting the young man.

They came in company, convoyed as (Continued on page 135)

By CYNTHIA STOCKLEY



The Garden of Peril

A Résumé of Part One:

DOCTOR BRUCE KELLY, of Umtété, a small town in Rhodesia, is something of a wizard as a physician—a baldish, stoutish, reddish, absent-minded man with flashes of piercing penetration.

He has a strange garden. In it he grows all sorts of plants, many of them deadly poisons, which he uses in his medical practice. The juice of one of these plants, colored like sloe gin, he uses as an injection in treating the illness of

PAMPREVILLE [PAM] HESELTINE, heir to the Marquisate of Scawndshane and a hopeless invalid until Doctor Kelly tried his injections, under which he is slowly improving. Pam's illness is the penalty of a life lived too swiftly, too fully. He

is tired now; he desires to live chiefly that his wife may come into his heritage with him. His chief solace is the company of quiet, cool

PERILLA KELLY, niece of the Doctor, called PERIL, and reminding those who know her of a pool of lilies. Peril is much in the Doctor's garden. She prepares his drugs, and also sits hour by hour watching the passers-by from behind a high hedge, and meditating about them. Once, on the boat to Africa, she had been thrown in with Pam's wife

DORIA HESELTINE, and has judged the woman for what she is. Doria, indeed, lives chiefly for her own beautiful face and figure. Her amusement is breaking the hearts of men; her serious pursuit, power and riches. She does not love her husband in the least; but she too wants him to live—for the Marquisate. Meanwhile she is doing her utmost to lure Pam's cousin into making love to her.

One day, as part of a plan to inveigle him into calling, she goes to Peril's house to telephone. There she accidentally sees some of the sloe-like plant juice and learns from Peril that it is a deadly poison from which the victim could not be saved unless it were known that he had taken it. Doria seems strangely fascinated and insists that she must have a gown of that color.

Also, her ruse in telephoning from the Doctor's house instead of her own has been successful in luring again to her side

PUNCH HESELTINE, Pam's cousin, a debonair Rhodesian Mounted Policeman who, like Pam, has burned up a fortune and to whom so exquisitely finished a woman as Doria represents all he can no longer have. Yet Punch stubbornly fights the allure of Doria, intermittently breaks away from her; he is too loyal to Pam to take what he sees he might have. Lately, too, he has met Peril and finds a curious relief in her rare fineness contrasted with his hectic life.

One night he does very nearly take Doria in his arms at her gate; but Peril accidentally passes, he gets a new grip on himself, and Doria's triumphant moment, to her enraged chagrin, is gone.

On his way to camp, Punch calls on Peril to return her hat, which she had forgotten, and finds the girl weeping over the loss of a pet "bush-baby" killed by a dog. He comforts her, more deeply affected by her girlish genuineness than he cares to confess.

On arriving at camp that night, Punch finds two messages awaiting him. One is a telegram calling him to Northern

A New Novel of South Africa by the Author of "PONJOLA"



Illustrations by
Dean Cornwell

Rhodesia on police business—a welcome excuse to escape Doria's influence. The other is a cablegram advising him that Pam's younger brother Richard has been killed skiing in Switzerland, and reminding him that in case of Pam's death he, Punch, is the next heir.

But Pam's health is growing daily better. "Not much of the non-survivor about old Pam now," Punch thinks, smiling. "He's a hot number, as they'll pretty soon discover."

Part Two:

IT WAS out of the question to take the news of Dick's death over to Minto Lodge that night. Not so much because of the lateness of the hour as because Punch Heseltine's nature revolted against burdening a sick man's night with sorrow. For that Pam would be heartbroken he knew. Dick was an only brother, the baby of the house, and the last hope of that branch of the family. Besides, he had been such a splendid youngster. One of those gay, brave, clean-hearted boys of whom it is afterwards recognized that there was something about them not of this world.

Most people have met at some time one or more of these bright brief sojourners and been left with a haunting memory of them. During the war, how often had not Punch encountered them! A sort of fatal radiance marked them that the bullet or wandering piece of shell could never miss.

The stamp of recall, Punch used to call it to himself—recall to the golden halls of a King who could no longer spare such gallant knights to earth. And now he remembered that he had

seen the stamp clearly marked on young Dick . . . It is always remembered afterwards!

Glory, coupled with an early tomb!

Yet the boy had been spared through the last year of war—the only one he had been old enough to join in—to be killed amusing himself! Leaping from some slope above the Cresta Run, with youth and courage rushing hot in his veins, through the crystal-cold air into eternity! Well. A good death! A death that Pam would understand, anyhow, however much it broke him up. Thank God old Pam was a sportsman, and as such, even if he didn't read much poetry, knew the significance of those two lines:

At the doors of life, by the gates of breath,
There are worse things waiting for men than
Death.

Something to be grateful for, too, that Pam was so much better that no bad consequences need be feared from the blow, once the sharpness of it was over.

However, it occurred to Punch that he ought to get Bruce Kelly's opinion before doing anything in the matter, and with this in his mind he stopped his horse at the gate of The Hill next morning and entered once more into that garden of the last night's sweet and subtle experience.

It still had a magic air, he thought as he mounted the winding path to the house, and caught again in his nostrils the sharp odors of herbs and scented things. A man might capture enchantment here, something to carry with him for refreshment through the dusty wastes of life, something to hide in his heart forever!

The Doctor stood on the veranda, just about to set off on his morning rounds, patting his pockets, looking at his watch and consulting his notebook, while Peril waited gravely beside him, holding his hat and a little leather case. Thus Punch saw her for the first time in the broad eye of day, under the scrutiny of Africa's morning sun, a piercing indagation that only youth can bear with equanimity—

Rose-white youth,
Passionate, pale . . .

And on Peril, in her smock of larkspur-blue, it enhanced a look of dawn and dew. He saw at last that her eyes were of a clear,



"What on earth! *Doria!*" cried Pam. It was as if the sound of his voice struck her like lightning.

warm honey color. Faint crescents of shadow beneath them were the sole trace of last night's wild storm, and they gave him an odd thrill. He immensely admired self-control and serenity in man or woman, but it thrilled him to remember that she could weep so wildly, that under that slumbering pool of lilies there were passionate fountains of emotion. The thought that he shared this secret with her was like a sudden precious gift put into his hand.

All the same he could see they were both wondering why he had come, and he made haste to explain that he wanted advice from the Doctor as to breaking some family bad news to Pam. At which the girl softly and swiftly disappeared in the garden.

"It is very distressing," Bruce Kelly decided with knitted brow. "But you would not be justified in keeping it back, and

thank the Lord he is well enough to stand it now. A week or two ago I couldn't have answered for him."

They walked down to Minto Lodge together, and the Doctor elected to wait in the garden, on the off chance that he might be required, and also, he said, because he wanted to have a quiet chat with Nurse Gordon.

"Send her out here to me, and mind you have your cousin to yourself when you tell him. Keep Mrs. Heseltine and everyone else out of the room if possible."

With which instruction Punch found himself very much in accord. The Heseltine men were not much given to audiences when they were in grief. Nor to wearing their sorrows on their sleeves or anywhere else where they might be easily observed. The more astonishing then that Pam should instantly have

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divined from one glance at his cousin's mask-like face that something was wrong. Sickness seemed to have endowed him with a sense of second sight that he certainly did not possess in health.

"Out with it, Punch!"

"Bad news, old chap."

Pam Heseltine took the cigarette from his mouth and pressed it, red end down, on one of the breakfast plates still littering the table. A tightened, whitened look came about his lips. He knew it could not be the "old man." Punch would not make a song and dance about *that* piece of intelligence, for they were not hypocrites, and neither of them cared a tuppenny about the egotistical, unlovable, vindictive old Marquis. And it couldn't be Doria, for he had spoken to her through her door adjoining the dining room not ten minutes ago. And Punch, the next best, was here before him. Then?

"Not—not young Dick?" His voice broke and he knew the answer before it came.

"Yes," Punch answered gently, "young Dick. On the slopes above the Cresta."

Pam gave a low groan, like a man who has received a mortal thrust, and sat back closing his eyes. *That* old place! He saw it clearly as he had seen it many a time. Steep allures of whiteness and softness, untrodden, unspeakably inviting . . . the far ridges of pine prickling and darkling against a sky of dazzling blue . . . bright sunshine . . . rose-pink and hyacinthine shadows dancing under distant ice peaks. *That* old place! To go back on one of the Heseltines! And young Dick too!

"The best of the bunch!" he muttered.

"Yes—the best of us, Pam. Far better have been me."

Pam lifted his head and regarded his cousin with eyes grown desolate.

"Or better still me—for all the good I am in this blasted world. You will have children to carry on the old line. I never shall."

They did not know how long Doria had been with them before they noticed her, so softly had she opened the door from her room and remained standing like a lovely specter, in her jade-green wrapper, glimmering through her mysterious shroudings of tulle like a tinted pearl. At all events it was not necessary to repeat the tragic fact. She had gathered *that* at least, and when she spoke it was only to ask in subdued and mournful voice when it happened and how. But of course Punch could only repeat the bare event. The rest was surmise, until more news came in, but he and Pam, old skiers themselves, had already filled in details, just as they knew without telling that it could not have been the Cresta itself where the boy was killed, but those steep slopes above it, so treacherously liable to the avalanche that carries a man to swift and rushing death over the precipice. He had been careful not to bring the cable with him because of certain features in it unnecessary to obtrude upon his cousin's attention, and it was disconcerting to find Doria exhibiting an inconvenient curiosity.

"Where is the cablegram? How strange they should send it to *you*, Punch, instead of to us!"

"They knew Pam was ill, of course—or *has* been."

"Not strange at all," interrupted Pam harshly. "The old man looks upon me as good as dead already—and *you*, my dear, don't come into it at all. Don't forget that. A different thing if we'd had children." His unhappy gaze fixed itself on her with a hostility that astonished Punch as much as the words. He had never known his cousin to speak to or look at his wife with anything but a cynical amusement tempered by tenderness. But what were these acrid mutterings that now fell from him? "If *you'd* chosen to have children!"—he gave her a bitter glance. "As it is you must remember that Punch comes next—Punch and *his* children." His head sagged wearily forward between his shoulders. "And a good thing, too!" he muttered.

This was miserably embarrassing to Punch. Unbearable indeed, and he got up hastily. The obligation of kinship that had brought him did not include listening to domestic recrimination, and he was astonished and annoyed at his cousin's attack even as he could not but admire Doria's *mien* under it. She stood there silent and proud, looking from one man to the other with a brooding reflectiveness.

"What *really* matters, old man"—Punch laid a hand on his cousin's shoulders in passing and spoke with a tenderness he could not withhold from that stricken man—"is that you should go on improving in health as you have done. And mind, I expect to see you as strong as I am myself when I get back in a month or two from Northern Rhodesia."

"*Northern Rhodesia!*" Reflectiveness left Doria's gaze, giving place to a tense and quivering interest. The words leaped into the room like something alive. Even Pam, lost in his miserable thoughts, looked up inquiringly to his wife's face and seemed arrested by something he saw there. Meanwhile Punch was calmly propounding the matter of his sudden summons to Bulawayo and the unavailability of an immediate departure.

"But Punch—"

Deliberately he ignored the pleading urgency of her eyes. They beckoned, they called, almost they wound arms about him. But keeping his careless air he held firm in his resolution.



Thus Punch saw her for the first time in the broad eye of day. And on Peril, Africa's morning sun enhanced a look of dawn and dew.



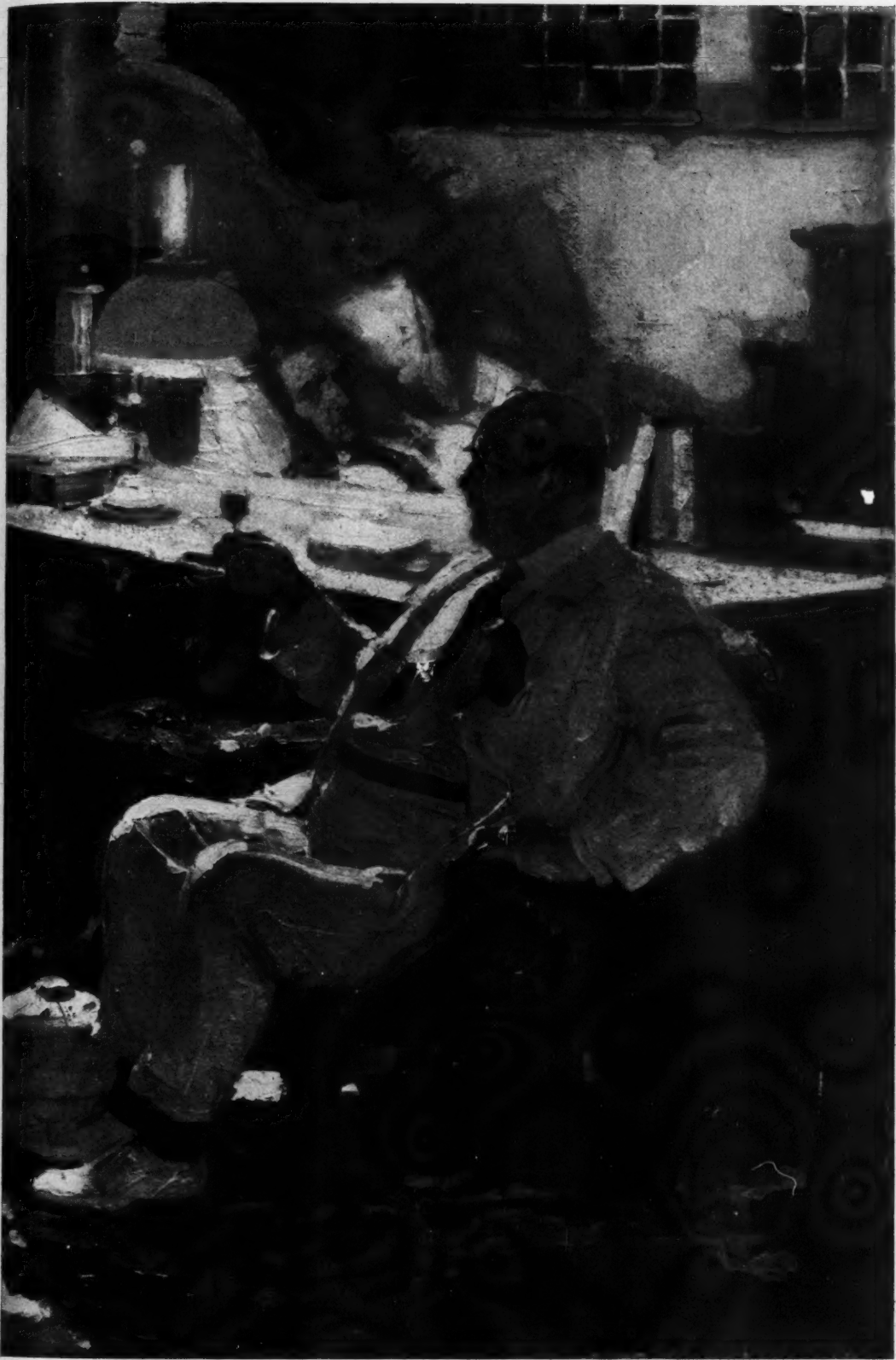
The Doctor examined the drink critically. "It seems to me," he said to Pam, "a good deal

"I'm afraid it can't be helped—I must absolutely say good by *now*. Much as I should like to look in again, it will be simply impossible—a hundred things to do before I go—got to catch the noon train or there'll be the dickens to pay."

"But Punch, I *must* speak to you before. Just wait until I

get into a gown . . . I'll be out in the garden in a few minutes."

"By the way, the Doctor's in the garden waiting to come and see Pam. *Must* go, Doria—sorry, but I'm rushed to death this morning. Besides, I shall only be gone a couple of months at the outside . . . Now remember, Pam, my dear merchant,



lighter in color than the stuff you had." "There, I *knew* it!" cried Doria in mock despair.

you're to be as fit as a fiddle when I return . . . Good by, Doria . . . So long, Pam."

By sheer dint of talking all the time and taking no note of anything said or *looked* at him, he got away at last. But he was breathing hard, like a man who has escaped a deep danger,

when he rode off at a gallop down the road. And he managed the noon train without seeing anyone again.

Moreover he contrived to evade the telephone calls that pursued him throughout the morning whether in club or camp or town office, with a certain anonymous urgency. Someone was



moving Heaven and earth to communicate with him, but that quality of iron in him resisted the demand. He intended to remain faithful to certain resolutions made the night before—resolutions that a man who considered himself a clean Englishman with a love of “the game” as played by “white men” had got to make, and keep. Fate had given a hand by calling him away from Umtété at this juncture. Also, there was something else . . . something had nestled in his hand and winged into the silent places of his heart. There was a girl with warm, honey-colored eyes. A pool of lilies!

Pam Heseltine did not get over his brother's death as well as could have been hoped, considering the firm foundation his general health had regained. He brooded. And more than once in the first few weeks Doctor Kelly regretted that Punch should have been called away just then, for of all people that gay and amusing Policeman might have distracted the patient from his sorrow. Bruce Kelly, indeed, was astonished at the fund of grief revealed in the man. It seemed almost unnatural; as if the boy had been a son instead of a brother.

But that was just it. Dick *had* been more of a son than a brother, for when their mother died, in giving him birth, the elder boy, already of age, had expended all there was of generosity in him on the little motherless chap. Fathering him too, for their father died within a year and there was no one else but Pam to see young Dick through Eton scrapes and Oxford escapades. And always the younger son remained sweet and clean and gallant, and always the elder one in the worst moments of his extravagant career had been in the habit of thinking:

“Never mind. *I'm* a rotter, but there's Dick to carry on. Dick will make good. Dick's the boy!”

And now Dick's bright young flame had been blown out, and it seemed as if the world stood still for Pam Heseltine.

Not that he regretted or distrusted Punch in the position of heir, for after all Punch was his father's brother's son, blood of his blood, a true Heseltine. But somehow, no one—not even Punch himself—had ever thought of *him* as heir to the

Punch and Doctor Kelly walked together to Minto Lodge to tell Pam the news of young Dick's death

Marquisate. How, indeed, should they with three good lives between, and one of them a strong and hefty youngster in the flower of manhood?

Punch was all right, of course, but he didn't happen to be Dick. That was all. And when one is forty-five one is a bit late in acclimatizing oneself to new ideas and changed arrangements.

A bit late for everything in fact, thought Pam, except to brood over new griefs and old disappointments.

That old secret bitterness, for instance, of Doria's refusal to bear children. While Dick lived, the hurt of it had been kept from being too poignantly unbearable. But now . . . now, after all these years, he had upbraided her with it in the presence of Punch! Good Lord, it was unbelievable! What on earth could have come over him? And she had taken it like a saint!

and distract him. No longer did he need any other nurse.

And Doria *could* be a companion when she liked—the sort he had dreamed of in those sweet, halcyon days when he married her believing that life was going to be something more, at last, than a fevered round of pleasure. Yes, for a little while he had dreamed dreams, seen visions of a *real* life, with children about them . . . a son! . . . a son who would have saved him from himself! But Doria soon smashed up *that* dream; soon showed him that her views of life were only what his had been. Merely he had found another devotee of pleasure, one more avid for it even than himself. Except that her pleasures were different.

He didn't in fact know just *what* her pleasures were, for they had soon drifted apart and gone their different ways. But he knew that she enjoyed them, for always she had the air of one who ate and drank of pleasure. Her lips were red, her eyes intoxicated with it. She breathed and radiated love of it. That came at last to be the difference between them. Pleasure had brought him to the point of death, but Doria throve on it; perhaps because she never in all forgot those two essentials, her health and her beauty. Those always came first. Pam could even admire her for that. Nothing grudging about him. He could admire anything that was well done—even selfishness.



Never a word, then or after. Nor had she sulked. No, she had been a perfect angel ever since, as if *she* had been in the wrong, not he.

Yes, by degrees it became clear to him that from the day of Punch's bringing the bad news, Doria had become a changed woman. Freely and generously now she offered her companionship to him, feverishly she spent herself in efforts to entertain

But this new Doria—born on the day after Dick's death, and now nearly a month old—seemed to have no trace of selfishness in her. Rather was she a saint, a companion, a nurse; a mate such as he had dreamed of in those old days! And it was a strange and wonderful thing at last—she even seemed to be forgetting that passion for her own beauty which had always

infuriated him even while he laughed at it. Her passion now—could it be true?—seemed to be for nothing but his society. The madness for her own beauty had passed. Sometimes even, when they were alone, she let him see her without shroudings and cloudings of veils, without scarlet paint on her lips or powder on her cheeks, looking a little worn perhaps, rather like a haggard angel bored with Heaven; but like that he found her ravishing.

And lately she had begun to make him promises. With her eyes and the touch of her lips on his she made him promises that beggared the richest moments he had known, bringing back the thrill of youth into his veins, making him wonder if he was mad to have thought it too late to find with her still those things he had dreamed of in the long ago.

After all, neither of them was *really* old. Certainly Doria was not. She could still look like a girl at times, even without her shroudings, especially at night, and she had kept every line and curve of her exquisite body. He was not old either—forty-five is not old. Not if a woman is learning to love you all over again—a beautiful woman like Doria.

If only he had not wasted and destroyed his health! But he would get it back again, he determined that at last, under her caresses and loving care. He would cast off this lethargy of grief for Dick, this depression of body and soul, and grow young again. He would do as Punch had bade him and become as "fit as a fiddle." These were the resolves that Pam Heseltine made within a month or so of his cousin's departure, filling his wife's eyes with tender, happy tears when he told her of them.

But deep in him he sometimes felt a dull foreboding that the decision came too late; that it did not lie in his own hands as it seemed to have done only a few weeks back. However, he said nothing to his wife of this, nor to his medical man. Pain and he had been fellow sojourners for so long that he had grown used to the companionship. And never had his been the rôle of whiner or quitter. Always without complaint he had taken the "medicine" so well earned by himself.

But lately he was often aware of a new and unknown element supplementing the old tortures, a different form of rack for his nervous system, a more subtle pair of pincers tearing his heart and brain, and though, privately, he considered it too much of a darned good thing, he did not complain. He just hoped it would pass. And after all, some parts of the day were free of it. The early morning hours were the worst, before anyone was about, and he suffered them alone, and said nothing. Gradually the misery passed, leaving a great weariness and exhaustion, but he pulled himself together and by afternoon felt considerably better; towards evening he had almost recovered. At dinner time he was at his best.

Afterwards, the night brought sleep instead of the old insomnia; but even in that something unusual and disconcerting obtruded itself. Heavy, dreamless sleep it was, a plunging into unconsciousness, like going deep into fathomless seas and feeling all the weight of them pressing him under, down, down. He would wake at last full of a nameless fear, a feeling as of some horrible fate escaped. Then, at about three in the morning, the pains would begin.

Naturally these things and the result of them were not lost upon one person's practiced eye. However silent and stoical the patient might be the Doctor knew well enough that the remarkable improvement of a month back was not being sustained, or renewed. Bruce Kelly watched Heseltine's newly-found color fade, his skin return to its parchments texture and his profile resume its hawklike sharpness; and it puzzled him considerably. The daily berry injections were being continued and always gave a good reaction. Yet each morning the Doctor detected something adverse, a slight change for the worse, a shade, a nuance, one that taken by itself would count for nothing. But when this happens daily—when shades and nuances accumulate—they can make a big shadow to sit upon a Doctor's mind and make him wear a worried look.

Yet for the moment there seemed nothing to be done to improve matters. He *knew* that the injections were the right thing, and had implicit faith in his own judgment. Moreover conditions generally were better now than when the treatment first started, and there seemed absolutely no reason why the patient should not at any time recommence his strides towards recovery. Cooler weather had set in, the sick man had become extraordinarily tractable, and it was plain to the dullest intelligence that domestic harmony reigned as it had never reigned before at Minto Lodge.

Even the Doctor's glance, vague for all things other than his work, could not but take in the transformation of the lovely Mrs. Heseltine into a devoted nurse and companion. And a

wife utterly wrapped up in her husband's welfare, with no room in her mind for any other interest, is an edifying sight. She no longer went riding, though naturally there were plenty of aspirants to the position of escort left vacant by the absconded Policeman, including the Honorable John Camp, younger son of a war Peer, who sported the latest thing in spats and motors and was known briefly as On-Jon. But Doria persistently neglected all these and other social attractions that Umtété offered, so as to give herself more leisure at her husband's side.

In the end, Doctor Kelly had to remonstrate with her upon this very subject, for it became clear to him that she as well as the patient was losing weight. Indeed, Keable could have verified this observation, for the maid's massaging labors had lately become so light as to be practically negligible. Doria Heseltine kept thin nowadays without any extraneous assistance. The consuming fires of anxiety seemed to be doing the work which hitherto Keable's nimble fingers had so satisfactorily performed. At any rate Bruce Kelly did not at all approve of the look of strain she wore, and took it upon himself to insist that the daily hour she allowed herself out of doors and usually spent in the garden at The Hill should be extended to three, her place at Pam Heseltine's side to be taken meanwhile by Peril.

Doria withstood this at first, but the Doctor warned her that he did not intend to have another patient on his hands, and that if she failed to do as directed he should have to reinstate Nurse Gordon as a permanency, instead of only having her up from the hospital twice a day, which had for some time past been the arrangement.

At which threat Doria became docile in her turn, obediently fulfilled the condition of staying out a full three hours, and pleased the Doctor much by telling him that she had come to adore his garden as the loveliest spot in Rhodesia.

As for Peril, she found her "on duty" shifts with the patient strangely different from those of the past, either at the time when he expected to die and didn't give a hang anyway, or the later period when he had felt himself coming back to life and rejoiced in it like a child. The gay and cheerful Pam had disappeared as completely as the sardonic, obstreperous one, and though in a way this Pam seemed happier than either, it troubled her that he sat so still in his chair or lay so immobile on his sofa, never wanting to play cards now, nor appearing to take any pleasure in reading or conversation, but filled rather with an immense listlessness that yet seemed purely physical and in pathetic contrast to the fever of hope and longing in his eyes.

Almost as if he did not wish her to read that burning hope in them, he nearly always kept his eyes closed while Peril was with him, sometimes remaining silent for so long that the girl would feel a tremor of fear, and leave off reading, or make a slight noise for the sheer relief of seeing him lift his lids. But she could not help noticing that the return of Doria from her walk instantly cheered him up. The very sound of her step in the garden brightened his face. It was wonderful. Wonderful, too, the change in Doria, the care and consideration she now lavished on him, in place of the careless selfishness of the Doria Peril once had known.

After her return there would follow a jolly little interlude of talk and laughter, Pam would revive from his listlessness and Doria would mix him the sundowner he was once more permitted by Doctor Kelly to have, since a certain amount of stimulant and "bucking up" seemed to be generally indicated. Then Peril would leave them and go back by herself through the dusk, marveling a little, hoping much, fearing she knew not what, and thinking a great deal of one whose name she now scarcely ever heard. For so wrapped up in themselves were Doria and her husband that they had not a thought to spare between them, it seemed, for one who only a few weeks before stood daily on their doorstep, an ever welcome visitor. The name of Punch Heseltine never fell from their lips. It was as though he had ceased to exist, instead of being only a few hundred miles away somewhere in the same country, and due back at any time. Peril found it passing strange. Something in it, too, to resent. Yet surely she ought only to have been glad and happy to think of that happy pair she had just left together!

There was no ambiguity at all events about Pam Heseltine's contentment in being alone with his wife. This was the hour he had looked forward to all day, keeping quiet for it in the hope that all the sooner would pain fade. He could be fairly certain now of a few hours of temporary well being, and humble gratitude filled him that it should come at eventide, the time when he and Doria were usually alone.

What matter if he had to pay for it afterwards as he always did in bed, with the pangs of Hell, (Continued on page 148)

By FRANK R.
ADAMS



Illustrations by
Charles D. Mitchell

*The
Love Story
of a
Home
Body*

"Daylight"

DELIGHT BREWSTER'S father was one of those old time sentimental pessimists.

He frequently said: "I have nothing to live for. I would be much better off if I were dead."

Often he referred to Delight's mother—always in terms of his own grief, however. "When she passed on, the light of my existence went out. Nothing but eternal mourning was left for me." He was the sort of person who said "passed on" with a self-conscious sigh whenever he meant "died."

Naturally anyone as lugubrious as that was also subject to many bodily ailments. Say what you will about Doctor Coué, there is something in this idea of fooling the subconscious mind. Blaine Brewster rather welcomed physical debility—it gave him more grounds for his monologue to the effect that the universe did not wag so well as it had once, not for him anyway. So, noticing the "Welcome" on the mat, all the idle complaints in the world came in and sat down. He became a rendezvous for diseases, a club where they could meet and compare notes.

Thus he had "flu" regularly several times each winter, debilitating headaches almost daily, indigestion, heart attacks, rheumatism and nervous breakdown whenever he had time off from more engrossing sicknesses. Naturally such a succession of troubles left him "poorly" even in between spells.

He required a lot of attention and sympathy. If he didn't get it he threatened to be "gone some day when you come back from one of your pleasure jaunts."

You would scarcely believe that such a person existed nowadays except that you probably know one yourself. They're

old-fashioned but not by any means extinct. Even irreverent "kidding" has failed to cheer them into the perhaps cynical but none the less comfortable modern attitude that "life is for the liver," and that while a Pollyanna is a pest a Blue Goop is vermiform superfluity.

The way Blaine Brewster sapped the best years of his daughter's young life would be a credit to any bat-vampire or succubus in legend or history. He was the albatross that, hanging around Delight's youthful neck, made her shunned by pleasure and pleasure seekers.

Quite naturally young men did not care to call just to listen to a diagnosis by an ubiquitous invalid smelling of *eau de liniment*; and to get Delight away from the house for a dance or even for a casual movie required so much plotting in advance, and was so apt to be frustrated by a sudden "attack" if her father suspected it, that finally even the most enterprising swains gave it up and sought entertainment with daughters who were less entangled.

Gradually Delight became a home body, almost a recluse, her sole dissipation being an occasional hour to herself in the garden of the Brewster place, or a romp with her dogs, of which there were several because she had two of assorted sexes to start with and could never bear to part with any that ensued.

Delight had a good view of old maidhood approaching in a galloping chariot. When she was twenty-four she could even hear the rhythm of the hoof beats.

Cupid had no chance of rescuing her in time except by a surprise attack.

One of the earliest recorded military stratagems had to do with a wooden horse which the Greeks left on the battlefield for the Trojans to drag inside their own walls.

It is still a good trick.

Not meaning exactly that there was anything wooden about Benjamin Van Vechten although he could look that way when he wanted to.

II

"Who is that girl and when do I meet her?"

"Which one?"

"She has gray eyes if I'm any judge at this distance, and her hosiery is impeccable and of a heather texture which is ordinarily very trying to ankles which are not drawn for the advertising pages of the ladies' magazines. Do I need to describe further or—"

"You mean Delight Brewster, I guess—"

"Correct. She looks as if that might be her name. Now when do I foregather with her to exchange opinions about palmistry, Freud and anything else we happen to know?"

"You don't," Van Vechten's host denied.

"Interesting even if untrue. You know my nature. It is not necessary to spur me on by throwing obstacles in my path. I'm sold on this proposition already."

"You don't understand," Ben's friend explained patiently. "Delight is a sweet girl and all that but it takes so much time and effort to get acquainted with her that from an efficiency standpoint it isn't a good investment."

"Elucidate, Ivan."

Ivan elucidated, putting before his guest all the facts which were set forth in the opening sentences of this narrative, and adding a few opinions of his own anent the character of Blaine Brewster, whom he characterized as "a he-hen with the pip."

Ben considered the case. "You are quite right in your supposition that the ordinary approach is worse than useless in this particular instance. But I'm sorry for the girl—much sorrier than I would be if she were homely—and I'd like to show her a good time."

"As she has not had much amusement for the last ten years I imagine that even you could do it," Ivan remarked encouragingly; "that is, if you got the chance."

"I'll get it."

"How?"

"It's so darn simple I'm afraid you might be able to do it yourself if I told you. I'll start tomorrow. All I ask of you is not to introduce me to anyone else in town until I get going. I'm here incognito from now on."

"See here, Ben," Ivan protested seriously, "I won't stand for having you trifle with Delight's affections. Neither would anybody else in this town. For, while none of the fellows go with her because her father is such a pill, still nearly every one of us has been in love with her at one time or another—from a distance, you understand—and we would gladly provide melted paving material and goose fur for any sheik who damages her heart."

"My dear friend, you have mistaken mere conversational levity for actual flippancy of purpose. I have never been any more serious even in a woodshed with my father in the days before I had discovered the prophylactic qualities of a geography in the seat of the trousers."

"You don't mean to say that you have already made up your mind that you want to marry her?"

"I can't say exactly but I'll let you know say a week from today after I've found out if her lips were made for kisses or only for conversation."

Ivan regarded his friend coldly. "Delight Brewster is not that kind of a girl."

"My dear boy, all girls are that kind of girls. It was God's idea to make 'em that way. Don't think because you may have failed yourself that a cosmopolitan fusser of wide experience like—"

"Humph!"

"Your tone implies doubt. One hundred dollars I can inside of a week."

"I don't want your money."

"You won't get it. I may have to marry her to win, but you have to admit that a girl who has been trained the way she has would make a wonderful wife for a selfish man like myself."

"Do you want me to take you there to call this evening?"

"I do not. An introduction from you would be a distinct handicap. No offense meant, of course."

"I can see that. Won't you cut yourself a piece of cake?"

III

AND on Wednesday evening Ivan Jones startled the world, also the Brewsters, by calling. They were not accustomed to having social visitors.

"Father is not very well," Delight explained doubtfully.

Ivan had known her too long to be dampened by that announcement. "I'm sorry. It must be very inconvenient for you."

"I wasn't thinking of myself."

"You never are, sweet child. That's why we all adore you—even if we are forced to do it distantly."

"Say some more, Ivan. I haven't listened to a good blarneyer for a long time and I believe it's just the tonic I need."

"Good. Then come with me and I'll take you on for a riotous evening at the Club Royale where they have an orchestra that is so wicked it ought to be arrested. Come with me and I'll breathe discreet sweet nothings in your ear all the evening. What say?"

Ivan had a double purpose in his invitation. One of them was a secret hope that he could get Delight out of the house before Ben Van Vechten arrived and thus ruin the latter's plans. Ivan did not approve of them anyway.

"I'd like to," Delight answered after a moment's hesitation, "but there is no one I could leave in charge of father."

"All the servants out?"

"All except Ben."

"Ben?" An echo of alarm crept into Ivan's voice in spite of himself, an inkling that something was not as it should be.

"Ben who?"

"He hasn't told us his last name yet and as he doesn't understand any English I haven't been able to question him much."

"Oh, I see! You'll pardon my curiosity, sweet lady, but how, when and why did you hire this—this—er—"

"He came to the door yesterday asking for something to eat. The cook, who couldn't understand him, flatteringly sent for me. He didn't look like a professional tramp. He was neat and clean even if his clothes did not fit. I couldn't make out what he tried to say either but I guessed that he was hungry and gave him a handout."

"Later in the day the cook came to me and said he was still around working in the yard. I went out to tell him that he had done enough to pay for his dinner but he only grinned idiotically and kissed my hand—I guess he must be a peasant or something from some country where that sort of thing is the custom. Anyway I couldn't get rid of him and he looks as if he was going to be the best combined house and yard man we ever had, so I think I'll let him stay. Besides all that he is very wonderful with father. Seems to know just what dad wants without being told and is as gentle as a baby with him."

"I see. But Delight, child, don't you realize what fearful risks you are taking when you admit to domestic service, inside your house even, an oaf about whom you know nothing, a man who is doubtless one of the scum of Europe?"

"Oh, I'm sure no one could doubt Ben's character after looking at his face!"

"Well, I'm willing to submit myself to the test. May I see him?"

"Y-yes." Hesitantly. "He's with father now but I think it is early enough yet for father to welcome a caller. Will you come up to his room?"

Ivan did not want to but he went. Curiosity was one of the compelling causes.

The sick room smelled depressingly of stale medicines. An analytical nose could doubtless have sorted out the odors of half the stock of a modern pharmacy. There was only one light, one of those flexible arm standard floor lamps with a hooded bulb that threw the rays downward and left the upper part of the room in shadow.

Mr. Brewster was propped up in bed, a great hulk of a man, a sort of puddle of decayed power. He had heavy jowls that made him look a little like a mastiff—they pulled on his lower eyelids and gave him a sad expression. Perhaps it was looking in a mirror which had first given Blaine the idea that he was an invalid.



Apparently Ben's cranium was filled with an exceptionally durable mixture of cement and gravel.

Beside the bed stood a younger man, also powerful but lithe. He was rubbing the invalid's forehead with something pungent.

"Father, Mr. Jones has come to call on you."

"How do you do, Mr. Jones. Sit down here beside my bed and tell me if you ever in your life heard of a case similar

to the one I seem to be developing. The symptoms so far are like——"

"This pie-faced individual is Ben?" Ivan interrupted with a question.

"Yes, but don't be rude."



"You said he didn't understand English."

"He doesn't but I do and I will not have him maligned."

"I can't help expressing my honest opinion, can I? I'd be very wrong if I did not. I think this man is a villain. He has a hard face. Notice the square head on him, too, and the dents where the bumps of kindness and consideration ought to be. My advice to you is to get rid of him as soon as possible. Look at the fiendish expression on his countenance now."

"That's probably because he senses your antagonism. He never looks at me that way."

To prove it Ben dropped swiftly on one knee and pressed his lips to the girl's hand. In his eyes was a look of melting adoration, the expression a calf undergoing the preliminary stages of weaning.

"Don't you strike him," Delight commanded as Ivan stepped threateningly forward. "It's only his quaint foreign way of expressing thanks. It doesn't mean anything."

"Mr. Brewster," Ivan appealed, "are you going to let this unrecommended, uneducated immigrant become an intimate of your household?"

All turned to the tyrannical old invalid, even Ben. After all the word of Paterfamilias Brewster was still law in that household.

"Well," declared Blaine as if weighing the proposition for the first time, "yesterday I would have agreed with you, Mr. Jones, and would have fired him out of the house even if I had been obliged to leave my couch of pain in order to do it. But today,

after having had him rub my back and lift me around in bed like I was a feather, I wouldn't think of letting him go under any consideration. No man could be a villain who understands my illness the way he does. That's my decision. He stays as long as he wants to."

Ivan glanced at the uneducated immigrant, who slowly pulled down his left eyelid and made a swift gesture as of one who cuts himself a piece of cake.

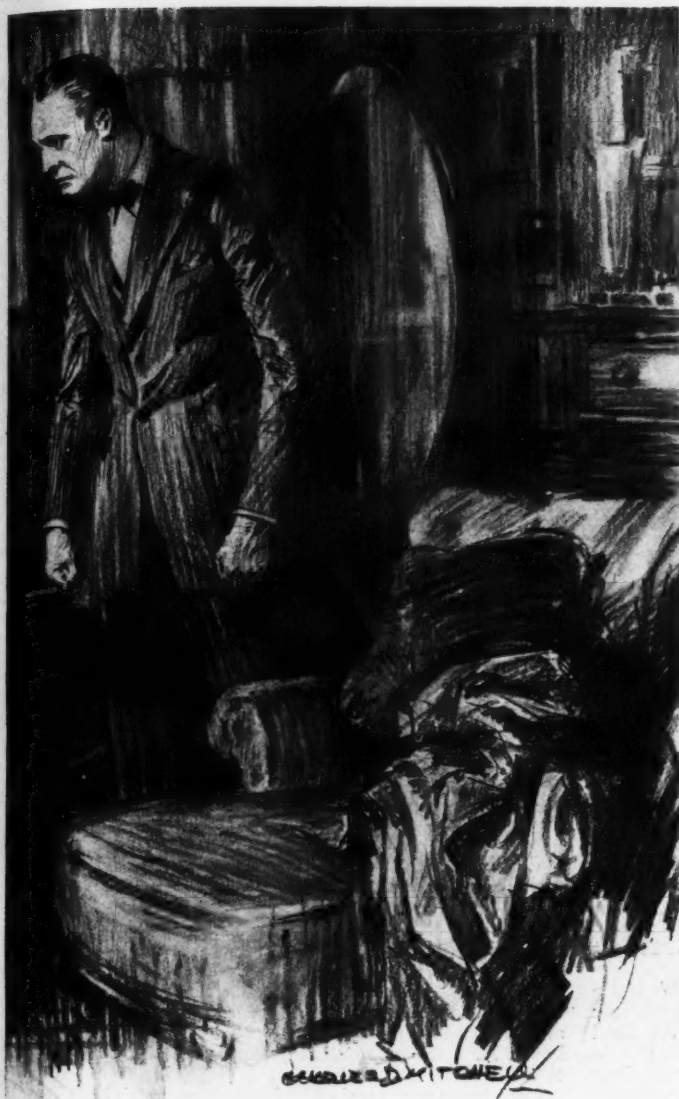
IV

It was the next day that Ben sprung the nickname by which she was to be known to him forever after.

Before that he had always touched her on the sleeve when he wished to call her attention, but he had heard her father address her by name and out of a clear sky he came to her and said "Mees Daylight" and motioned to indicate that he wanted her to follow him out into the yard. She did not correct his pronunciation but she made a mental note to begin teaching him the elements of the English language.

The first lesson came that afternoon. She had a little time to herself while her father was taking a nap and she found Ben working on the tulip beds in the yard—he did know something about horticulture apparently.

Delight brought an atlas with her, the idea being to combine several sorts of knowledge in one dose.



"Don't you strike him," Delight commanded
as Ivan Jones stepped threateningly forward.

"Ben," she said arrestingly, "come here." The motion she made with her arm supplemented the speech and he understood perfectly. There were two words learned already, she thought. To test him out she moved away and said "Come here" again, without the gesture.

Ben looked at her with a pathetic attempt at comprehension but made no move.

"Come here," she repeated. No reaction. "Come here!" More emphasis and a stamping of the foot. "Come here!"

A light burst upon Ben's eager countenance. He smiled beatifically and then gravely flopped down on the grass and rolled over as he had seen the dogs do when Delight put them through their one trick.

Delight kept from laughing in order not to hurt her slave's feelings. It was hard to do because Ben stayed down, looking up, much as the dogs did, for her permission to rise.

She finally remembered the signal and snapped her fingers. Ben scrambled to his feet with alacrity and stood poised with a grin of self-congratulation on his face and an expression that might be interpreted as willingness to do anything else she might suggest from retrieving a ball to going for a walk on a leash.

Taking no chances this time Delight guided him by hand to a rustic garden bench, invited him by gesture to sit beside her and opened the atlas to a map showing the world in two hemispheres.

On the theory that maps must be pretty much the same in all languages she pointed out that portion of North America

labeled "United States" and said "My country, my country, my country," over and over again. Then she pointed to him and inquired with a rising inflection "Your country?" She felt that it would help considerably in further lessons to know his nationality. She might even get a dictionary of his language as a working basis for a better understanding.

"Your country?" she repeated.

Ben nodded his head in proud comprehension. He had absorbed the idea and with finger poised he bent for a close inspection of the map, his lips working soundlessly as if he were trying to pronounce some of the unfamiliar names that were printed on the page. Finally he indicated that he had found what he wanted and triumphantly planted his index on a spot almost in the center of Africa.

"My country, my country, my country," he chanted in correct imitation of Delight's own announcement the moment before.

"No, no, no," Delight contradicted, shaking her head violently. "That's impossible. You're whiter than most men. Blonds do not come from the Congo."

But Ben insisted with much nodding of the head and vehement reiteration of the words "My country, Mees Daylight," until finally his preceptress gave up in despair without having secured a clue to his nationality.

Either Ben's cranium was filled with an exceptionally durable mixture of cement and gravel or else she was a veritable oil can as a teacher.

V

FOR ONE who showed no aptitude whatever for learning the spoken language Ben displayed a remarkable mastery of written English. Witness a letter to Ivan Jones composed one night in the privacy of Ben's room during an interlude when his services were not required by the tyrannical Mr. Brewster.

Dear Ivan (it ran):

I have your scurrilous note smuggled in by your servant who has the efficient furtiveness of a bootlegger. I am not the scoundrel you seem to imply. I might classify as all of the things you say I am were it not for the fact that I am up to my neck in love with "Daylight." God in his infinite artistry never created any other woman so adorable. You, who only know the front she puts on for outsiders, cannot possibly appreciate the wonder of her as I do from my dumb vantage point inside the family circle.

Knowing her convinces me that there is something after all in the old-fashioned and oriental idea of raising girls in seclusion. It has been successful in "Daylight's" case most certainly. She is mature

physically and yet her growth in sophistication has been charmingly retarded. You've no idea how much not knowing things adds to the interest which she holds for her prospective—I hope and pray—husband.

Think of the fascination of a vibrant feminine young person with a wicked twinkle in her eye who doesn't know it is there and, if she did, would never guess that the God of Natural Selection put it there as bait.

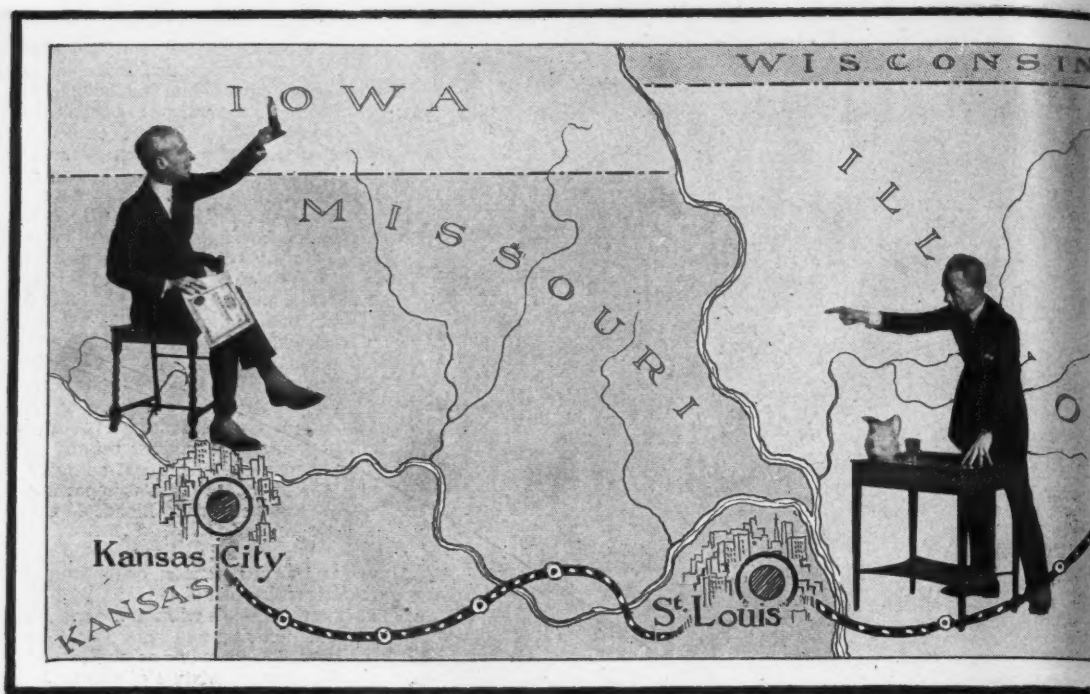
Doesn't "Daylight" suit her perfectly as a name? Not the name by which she is to be known to the world but as the heart moniker of the man who is to love her for all time. Boy, I hate to annoy you by raving, but I might as well tell you there wouldn't be any more illumination as far as I'm concerned if "Daylight" should disappear out of my life. She's the vivid flame that has supplanted all other altar fires and, if she'll let me, I'm going to be kneeling before it the day that I die.

The reason I write this to you is, first of all, because I've got to tell somebody about the way my love-gizzard is acting or else I'll bust. I've got to stay bottled up around here, must be a dumb Isaac in the presence of my heart's desire. The other reason for this letter is to tell you that the bet I made you that I would kiss her inside of a week is—

Ben stopped abruptly in his writing and listened.

"Ting!—Ting!—Ting!"

Three taps on Blaine Brewster's bedside bell. In the Brewster household that signal had much the same significance as a 4-11 fire alarm in a great city. It meant (Continued on page 104)



CAMPING OUT

MY UNCLE—the one who made the round trip to Denver but withal is democratic and easy to meet—has been imploring me to see more of the world.

He bulges with quaint aphorisms and things. Such as "Don't get in a rut!" and "Travel broadens the mind." So, heeding the avuncular admonition, I recently trekked out to what Broadway calls "the sticks."

The first stop was in Chicago. I was there last with Uncle during the World's Fair. While he was out buying the Masonic Temple I was hopping over hot air registers in the hotel lobby.

Of course, I was a callow youth then. Fate had not long before yanked me away from the business end of a Missouri plow. But years in New York had applied a coating of sophistry. Some folks even referred to me as a typical New Yorker. (A typical New Yorker is one who permits a Tarzan the Apes to snatch his hat in a café, calls Florenz Ziegfeld "Flo" and Delmonico's "Del's.")

I wore my russet-brown greatcoat, vulgarly termed the overcoat, my pearl-white London hat, and I carried with a certain Fifth Avenue swank an ivory-knobbed cane.

As the final "wow" I wore a zebra-striped collar. It was the one that caused a dowager at a theatrical first night to lift her lorgnette at me from a box and exclaim "Fawncy!" I'll say it is.

At the Chicago terminal—or whatever they are calling depots these days—I spurned vehicular conveyances to walk to my hotel. Going down a flight of steps my cane mixed up with my traveling bag and I snapped into a little Chaplin dance.

Some rough—at least he lacked everyday niceties—person shouted, "Don't let it throw you, cowboy." That was silly. I never rode the range in my life.

It was an auspicious moment that I turned into Michigan Boulevard. The famous thoroughfare was flooded with bright afternoon sunshine and lively with promenaders.

Inconsequential, but *en passant*—there's a neatly turned eight dollar phrase for you—I noticed a vivacious young thing eyeing me. I flicked a bit of imaginary fluff from my coat sleeve, trying not to appear self-conscious. Uncle always said adventure was just around the corner. That's Uncle—a quotation for everything. But no adventure this time. The young lady merely turned to her companion and inquired, "What's the advertising gag?" I didn't wince. Experts have kidded me.

At the Chicago hotel I felt a certain conspicuousness registering from New York. I did not want to appear uppity. I was once a clerk in a country hotel and if I do say so a competent one.

I could harpoon the raw potato with the guest's pen every time. Zip! Like that! Indeed I have a clipping from the Plattsburg, Mo., Leader referring to me as "Our Popular Knight of the Quill." When a baking powder drummer registered from New York I immediately assigned him to No. 6—the one with the two chairs and the waxed doves in a glass case.

The Chicago clerk, after adjusting the scarf twice, giving a meticulous polish to the nails and discussing the bill at Keith's with the telephone girl, spun the register around, eyed my cane and coat and inquired, "Are you a professional?" I shook my head. He mumbled something about a minstrel show being in town.

I was pleasantly surprised to find Chicago hotels have hot and cold running water in the rooms, French menus and electric lights. They are to pave the streets in the spring and may get the G. A. R. convention.

From Chicago I journeyed to Kansas City. I have been all over Europe and never climbed an Alp but when you reach Kansas City buy an alpenstock, put a feather in your hat, learn a couple of yodeling songs and ha ha Switzerland.

Leaping deftly from crag to crag I reached mid-town without throwing a shoe or jostling my new bridge work.

A taxicab driver, after nearly running me down, asked me how I liked the city. There was a suspicion of jeer in his voice.

Kansas City has more than one hotel—perhaps several. There are street cars, stores, and while I was not out across the tracks I understood they are building a new creamery. I hope they paint it pink. It seems to me that pink creameries are always the prettiest.

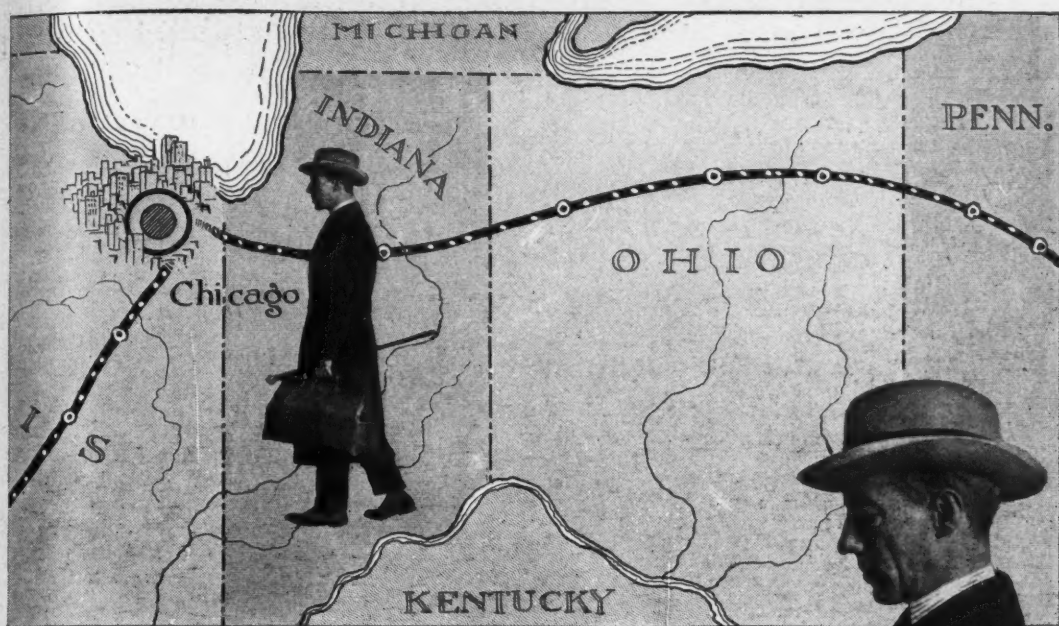
It is a warm-hearted city. A prosperous oil well owner called at my hotel. He owns vast acres in Oklahoma. Two of his managers called him up while he was in my room with excellent news. He showed me samples of crude oil. That, you know, is the oil which is crudest when rubbed in the hair.

Without a hint of suggestion from me, he permitted me to become a small shareholder. They allot only a small amount to each subscriber to keep it out of the hands of "the interests."

Going through one of the street arcades—for which they only charged the nominal sum of twenty-five cents—I was impressed with the metropolitan air of the shops. Many of them deliver purchases just as they do in New York.

St. Louis next claimed my attention. It is the custom in the provinces to have a slogan for each municipality. St. Louis is considering this one:

First in shoes! First in booze! And last in both leagues.



By O. O. McINTYRE

Rodolph Valentino was there and he and I were the guests of honor at a dinner. But that was no reason why one of the guests should shake hands with me and say "Glad to meet you, Mr. Turpin!"

The Mayor of St. Louis also invited us out to the zoological gardens one day. As a mark of courtesy they had named a monkey after me. And while I was there I heard a lady say to the keeper, "What time does McIntyre swing by his tail?" The idea!

Later at the walrus pit a bull walrus did what vaudeville calls a sitting standing dive and deluged me with muddy water. I hope he gets the toothache.

In St. Louis also I was broadgabbled over the radio. It is like shouting through a knot hole but it gave me courage to make a speech later before an advertising club. I should have entertained with a ukulele solo. All they needed to do was to put one in my hands and I would have done the rest, without a rehearsal.

It wasn't much of a speech and I didn't mind a fellow calling "Louder," but I think the fellow in the back of the hall with a flock of double chins who shouted "Yes, and funnier" might have restrained himself. Such remarks do not come under the head of Sophisticated Crevice. Boston for wise crack.

In the morning a St. Louis paper ran my picture and a later mail brought a letter from a surgical institute saying, "We make over the face without danger."

I know a cheaper way. But why should I twit Jack Dempsey?

Reflection convinces me a typical New Yorker should stay on his own little island. He is not so conspicuous. I know men who can wear white spats without blushing right on the Avenue.

In a dining car passing through what Meredith Nicholson in picturesque slang terms the "corn belt" I reached across the table for something or other and the gentleman opposite looked at my wrist watch and gave vent to a contemptuous sniff. Tiny, but a sniff just the same.

I did not sniff once at the "rheumatism ring" he was wearing. Vive and let vive—as Uncle says.

Neither did I appear bored in the smoker later when the same gentleman cornered a congressman and demanded to know if he "was for or against free seeds."

Several public questions interest me more. I am of that tranquil temperament that can accept a seed or let it alone. I have struggled through an entire session of Congress without writing our congressman for a single seed.

It was not until I stepped foot in New York again that I really felt at home. I hurried to my favorite slot in the Automat and then, following a custom of years, trickled over to the Ritz foyer to mingle with the other "guests."

It was good to feel that no matter what they thought of me in "the sticks," here I was still "a typical New Yorker."



Isabel Hall was like thousands of girls today. Not bad; innocent, rather; overflowing with verve, keenly alive to romance, determined to get all the joy she could out of life. But going about it without any sympathy or guidance from wiser heads, until her path led her straight to the edge of a pitfall.

With its extraordinary understanding of a phase of modern youth, this story might be called a Parable of Today.

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The Story of
Isabel

Illustrations by F. R. Gruger

THE DAY was radiant; clear and hazy, warm and crisp at the same time—perfect weather for a party. Still the telephone call which she expected from Amy did not come. Shadow-eyed, wan, Isabel tried to make herself believe that she was not bitterly disappointed.

"Perhaps it's just as well that Amy couldn't arrange it," she made herself reflect. "I'll have to get some sleep soon or zowie, I'll blow up. And sometime, when we least expect it, we're going to get caught at this game." But underneath she knew that with every jangled nerve she longed for that party. She yearned to see Bid Carleton again. Bid was so brutal and so tender. He frightened her even when he fascinated her—

The telephone rang.

Prickling with an instant alertness, she leaped to her feet, gave a quick, furtive glance about. The way was clear. Della Eff's wordless vocal improvisations, modified by the closed doors to a high sibilant humming, came from the kitchen. Della could not hear. Aunt Mattie sat—in the full blaze of the October morning—outside in the sun parlor, newspaper in hand. Her whole flat face—so innocently benign—seemed to be drawing the news through her moon-spectacled eyes somewhat as the sun draws water through the air rifts in a clouded sky. She could not hear. Isabel slipped into the hall; took the receiver off the hook.

"Lo," she called, with a soft suppressed eagerness, into the transmitter.

Amy Valentine's pretty voice—its chiseled quality a little exaggerated by an elaborate casualness—came in answer to her. "May I speak with Miss Isabel Hall?"

Amy's voice tore Isabel's fatigue away. Mirth bubbled to the surface of her mind. But she suppressed her impulse to laugh at the perfection of Amy's acting. She said, "This is Isabel Hall!"

"Oh, how stupid of me! This is Amy Valentine, Isabel."

"I thought it was your voice," Isabel declared. Out of the corner of her eye she saw that Aunt Mattie had dropped her

paper; was awaiting with resignation her summons to the telephone.

"It isn't a wayward girl, Aunt Mattie," she called reassuringly, her lips at such an angle to the transmitter that Amy must get the comic effect of her words. "It's only Amy Valentine." Simultaneously with the explosion of airy mirth which came over the wire from Amy, sounded Aunt Mattie's murmured: "Oh, I was afraid it was the Rest Home saying Della'd have to leave! I'll be sorry to lose Della. She's so—"

"I'm telephoning from my room," Amy went on with what seemed like irrelevance. "I'm just getting up. I don't know why I didn't wait until breakfast but I was just wondering if you would come here to dinner and to spend the night. There are two men visiting us this week-end and—"

Isabel's heart gave a great leap. Was Bid one of them? The other was probably Jerry Kitchen. But she did not care who the other was if only Bid. . . . Amy rattled on with her pre-meditated carelessness.

"It's so awkward having two on your hands at once. Father said I'd better invite somebody to be here with me as he's so busy."

Miss Hall had arisen, was heading with her slow, flat-footed amble towards the garden.

"Aunt Mattie," Isabel called after her. "Aunt Mattie!" And as her aunt paused, she threw out in a breath, "Amy Valentine wants to know if I can go over there for dinner and to spend the night."

Isabel fell easily into the attitudes and motions of awaiting her aunt's answer.

"Why ye-us! Ye-us!" it came. How Isabel hated that slow countrified, "Ye-us!" of Aunt Mattie's meditative moments. "Yes, certainly!" This yes was decisive enough. And indeed Isabel knew that her aunt was uncalculatingly glad to have her on visiting terms with a family so important as the Valentines. How surprised Aunt Mattie would be if she knew how seldom she entered the Valentine house! Isabel added in unnecessary



They passed what Isabel considered a wonderful evening. The Three Cities was a big road

afterthought, "Amy'll come for me in the car." Then into the receiver, "Auntie says yes, Amy. What time?"

"Oh, I'm so glad, Isabel! Quarter to seven. By!"

"By!" Isabel hung up. Her gray eyes—they seemed to blacken instead of brighten as the tide of her mirth flowed into them—fixed on her aunt's retreating figure. Aunt Mattie, walking straight toward blue sky and blue sea, stopped at the dahlia bed. She was good for at least fifteen minutes there, examining the plushy geometric blossoms which were her pride; picking fresh bunches for the house. Isabel waited an interval to give Amy time to come downstairs from her room to her father's library.

In that moment she saw Della Eff's figure, passing noiselessly from the kitchen into the dining room, outlined a pink silhouette against the door of frosted glass which separated the front hall from the back hall. A point of light at the level of Della's mouth—the opaque glass turned it orange—suddenly flared to a rosy glow; diminished to a point again. Then a white hand blurred up, tweaked it away.

Isabel's augmenting mirth poured jet into her gray eyes. "Della thought she'd camouflaged that smoke perfectly!" she mused. "Wait till I tell Amy! It'll burn her up!"

She took off the receiver, called a number into the telephone. "May I speak with Miss Amy Valentine?" she asked of the voice at the other end of the wire.

"I'll see, ma'am!" the voice answered. Sounded the tattoo of heavy steps bundling away from the telephone . . . light steps flying to it . . . then Amy's voice cool to the chilling point:

"Hullo! Hullo! This is Miss Valentine!"

"Oh, Amy!" Isabel said, her acting not quite so authentic, she felt, as Amy's, "how strange I did not recognize your voice! Amy, my aunt would like you to come here tonight for dinner and to spend the week-end with us."

"How sweet of her!" Amy replied in her most dulcet voice, her most charming accent. "I think it would be perfectly ducky. Of course I'll have to ask father. Wait a moment, please."

Her voice died away from the telephone. Isabel heard muffled: "Father, Miss Hall has invited me to spend the week-end at Little Finger. May I go?"

Pause. Silence. Amy's voice. "Hullo! Hullo! Isabel dear, father says I may go. What time?"

"Quarter to seven," Isabel answered with civil terseness. And at this her mirth rolled back too hard upon her. "Good by,



house. The food was delicious, and expensive. The dancing crowd was a heterogeneous miscellany.

Amy," she broke off abruptly. She hung up; leaned her head on her arm; quivered and gurgled.

And then Della Eff—how in the world had she got there; she must have gone out the dining room door and circled the house—appeared at the front door. Of course the girl could not have heard anything . . . Just the same she was going to tell Amy that notwithstanding the fun they got out of their double game they simply *must not* telephone from their houses again. It was easy enough for Isabel with only Aunt Mattie and Della Eff. But at the Valentine house where there were telephone extensions and anybody could listen in . . .

Della was waiting in the doorway as if to say something. What a figure the girl had—an arrow for slimness and delicate erect curving. She wore her pink gingham bungalow apron as though it were a Paris model. And the wind-blown fleece of her bobbed hair was like spun honey.

"Oh, Miss Hall!" Della said, "I forgot to tell you at breakfast a feller of the name of Wood Vining phoned 'fore you was up. He wouldn't let me wake you but said he was goin' away for two days and he gimme a phone number—it's there on the pad. He said he'd like you should phone him, sometime tomorrow after—if you're gonna be home tomorrow night."

"Thanks, Della."

Woodie Vining! Why, it was three months since Isabel had seen him! What a long way she had traveled since then and how far she had left Woodie behind. Amy had done that for her. Woodie was so small-towny, so serious, so slow. Amy's words for those traits were *provincial, bourgeois, middle-class*.

Isabel dressed with care and precision that night. Her sage-green suit; the flesh-colored georgette blouse that was more than half filet lace; the sage-green beaver hat with the exquisite feather drooping at one broad-brimmed side; her soft gray fur. Not that it made any difference how she dressed; she could not compete, she could never even *compare* with Amy. Amy Valentine was, Isabel thought, the most beautiful girl she had ever known. Amy had, in Isabel's opinion, not only beauty but class. Amy had so much—it was one of Amy's own words—*manner* . . . her very beauty had manner . . .

Isabel leaned forward to the mirror and gazed into her own eyes. Of course she had looks of a kind. Indeed, she had thought herself, well, yes, beautiful, until Amy had come to offer the contrast of her physical exquisiteness, her trained personality. And as it was, she had her points. Eyes, for instance, her best

feature, wide, gray, reed-lashed. But how much she preferred Amy's. Long, narrow, blue-green, Amy's eyes could turn in a flash from frozen turquoise pools to sun-kissed jade lakes.

But granted eyes, Isabel considered that her own looks ran in a diminishing scale of beauty through the spread-petal crimson of her mouth—how she admired the thinnish pinkness of Amy's fragiley curved lips—to the tragedy of her nose. Her nose had started all right. The line from brow to tip was as true as though planed; but from the instant of junction with the upper lip—how could it be so perverse—it tilted directly upward. Amy's nose was the perfection of straight regularity . . . transparent in the bridge.

Isabel morosely contemplated her hair; its turbulent abundance seemed to show even a silvery light when she compared it with the slim folds, melted from a golden metal touched with green, that were Amy's tractable tresses. Did her dimples help or hurt?—those shallow evanescences which floated to the surface of her face at such inopportune moments . . . Now certainly they seemed to accent the leaden wanness of her look. Perhaps Amy and she were going at too great a pace. Certainly sometimes they were both dead for sleep.

Isabel lightly filmed her cheek with rouge; dug deep along the firm outlines of her lips with a crimson stick; smoothed her brows with a black pencil. She came up under the make-up like a faded painting under the restorer. She touched her lashes . . .

"Say, girlie, you hadn't oughter use the pencil on your eye-winkers!" a voice interrupted. In the glass, Isabel saw that Della Eff was standing in the doorway. "Your aunt sent me up with these sheets," she interposed deft explanation before Isabel could speak. "What you wanta get is *Maserine*. It's liquid; but it don't make your eyes smart and it sticks. Comes in a litt a bitta red bottle."

Isabel braced herself. Della was the first of a long succession of Aunt Mattie's wayward girls—how Isabel loathed having them in the house!—whom she had ever had to put in her place. Stupid they had been, some of them, ugly tempered, morose, sly, inquisitive and lying; but she had never had to deal with familiarity before. She must do it now. A picture flashed across her consciousness of Amy handling the situation. How contemptuous would be her chilling glance . . . how icy her few words.

"Della," she said crisply, "when I want your advice I'll ask for it. Otherwise I'll be infinitely obliged if you'll keep it to yourself."

Inwardly, the instant the words dropped, she was conscious of a little trepidant wonder as to how Della would take this. And her mind leaped back to a scene between Amy and Della. She had told Amy all she knew about the girl.

"She's one who never would tell who the man was," she explained briefly. "The child died."

Amy sparkled with the cut-silver sparkle which her mirth developed when it was disdainful. "Some sport!" she pronounced. "I want to meet her. Just the same, of course, she was an awful fool."

Isabel took Amy into the kitchen, performed the rite of introduction. The instant she opened her mouth she knew that Della guessed that she had told Amy. Inwardly she quailed. But Della had held her own perfectly; her hard, violently vivid blue eyes straight on Amy's the whole time. Amy's long eyes were not so languid as usual. They never left Della's either. The two glances crossed like wary swords. Somehow, Isabel felt, it was as though she herself were not in the room at all . . . As for Amy—Amy had surprised her. Amy had come into the kitchen clothed in the most superior aspect of her "manner." And then—suddenly—she was chatty with Della; confident of course but not at all condescending; gay even . . .

Now, as then, Della Eff's expression did not seem to change. She looked at Isabel squarely for an instant. In that instant something—was it a sardonic humor?—flared behind the hard blue façade that was the front of her eyes. Suddenly and quite noiselessly she disappeared from the doorway.

Isabel's thoughts beat on. What a wonderful thing it was that Amy with all her advantages—training at an exclusive boarding school; travel in many foreign lands; her beauty, her smartness and her class—should have chosen her, Isabel, for a friend. Amy's friendship was a godsend to Isabel; it had come in the nick of time.

Somehow for years she had been growing further and further away from the Little Finger girls. Was it, though, that she had dropped them or that they had dropped her? This was a problem which, to Isabel's great surprise, she found herself at the oddest possible moments still striving to solve.

The problem might have bothered her more if a year ago she had not fallen in with that Dabney Center gang. Zowie, they were live ones! Of course she had not been seeing any of them since she and Amy had become real friends. Amy did not like the Dabney Center crowd. Amy said they were too rough. In fact, Amy's use of the word *vulgar* in this connection had produced the first difference between her and Isabel . . . Yet after a while Isabel saw that Amy was right . . . Now she was very grateful to Amy for rescuing her from that Dabney Center bunch.

Of course, though, she had to admit it, Amy had a quality—well, Isabel reluctantly recognized it as snobbishness. Take her attitude towards Aunt Mattie, for instance. Everybody admired Mathilda Hall, and the genuineness of her philanthropic impulse. Sometimes the newspapers ran interviews with her. Once there had been a magazine article with her picture. And she was such a thoroughbred too! Not even the people of Little Finger knew that the girls in the kitchen were wayward girls.

Of course for two or three years now Isabel herself had lied consistently to Aunt Mattie. She smoked in private; drank, whenever she got the chance, until she was pleasantly "jinged"; drove after midnight dances all over the countryside with couples she had picked up here and there. She had never done anything really "bad," of course. But there was much she preferred Aunt Mattie should not guess. Somehow, though, when she told about Aunt Mattie, Amy's immoderate peals of laughter had vaguely disturbed her. And "Your aunt's a riot, isn't she?" Amy had indulgently remarked after meeting Aunt Mattie . . . Well, of course Aunt Mattie would be amusing to Amy . . . And yet . . .

Isabel's friendship with Amy was so closely knit that nobody else—no other girl at least—could possibly come into it. When Amy had made her initial overtures, Isabel had thought, had rather hoped, that such an alliance would mean for her an intimacy also with the exclusive Belaise group, or the equally exclusive Fore Finger crowd; Isabel admired both these sets, not because they were exclusive but because they were themselves. But apparently Amy liked them as little as Isabel liked the Little Finger girls. After coming back from Paris, Amy had tried them out, she said, one after the other; but she had dropped them all. She often remarked: "I want you all to myself, Isabel. You're the only wild woman in this dead burg. Oh, if I'd only had you in Paris with me . . ."

That was another marvelous thing about Amy. Instead of being what it so bromelically was to Isabel—the Louvre . . . Notre Dame . . . Napoleon's Tomb—Paris was to Amy merely a series of restaurants in which she had enjoyed what she described as "wild parties." In fact, Amy had never even seen Napoleon's Tomb.

Once Amy said: "Father's awfully strong for the Belaise bunch. He thinks I play round with them all the time."

Isabel had a theory that it was to further this misunderstanding on General Valentine's part that Amy invited her so little to the house. She had been several times, of course, in that famous mansion—melancholy since the death of Amy's mother—but she was by no means an intimate there. But she suspected that its early-Victorian magnificence intrigued Amy as little as the mid-Victorian shabbiness of Aunt Mattie's house intrigued her. Indeed, Amy entertained her oftenest at the Belaise Country Club. But that in itself was an event for Isabel; she could never otherwise have entered its shaded, cultivated precincts. When Isabel and Amy met—Amy always came in her car—it was at some neutral point on the long country road between the two households. They met often, though; and always for some delightful revelry.

Men were continually motoring down from the city to see Amy. Many of them she had known in Paris. They seemed always to come in pairs; and Isabel made the necessary fourth in the square party which immediately evolved. The whole experience had been a dazzling one for Isabel. She had never known, never—but for Amy—could have known such men. Everything about them was different; and Isabel was always studying these points of difference. Their clothes had a quality; their shirts, shoes, studs; their very topcoats of so ample a volume, so heavy a cloth . . . Their voices—an enunciation precise with no appearance of precision. And "manner" too—the male counterpart of Amy's easy, authoritative superiority. Then one day Jerry Kitchen and Bid Carleton arrived together. And now those two came much oftener than anybody else. Half a dozen times their quartette had danced and driven all night.

Harmless excursions enough, the girls insisted to each other; only dancing and a little—a very little— (Continued on page 170)

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LIONEL BARRYMORE (Prince Lubimoff) with Alma Rubens (the Duchess de Delille) in Cosmopolitan Corporation's film of Ibanez's "The Enemies of Women"—the beautiful setting being Joseph Urban's.



***B**ILLIE BURKE, who as the clever and sprightly cabaret singer in Booth Tarkington's delightful new play, "Rose Briar," produced by Florenz Ziegfeld, has made one of the outstanding comedy hits of the New York season.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY NICHOLAS MURRAY



GLADYS DORE, who was the winsome and applauded "girl with the yellow fan" in the Tom Tom number of "Queen o' Hearts," has more recently made another big hit with her singing and dancing in "Wildflower."

PHOTOGRAPH BY AFEDA



DIANA GORDON'S blithe smile, to be sure, appeared briefly in George White's "Scandals"; but she really made her Broadway debut (a merry one) this season in Oliver Morosco's dazzling musical comedy, "Lady Butterfly."

PHOTOGRAPH BY WHITE STUDIO

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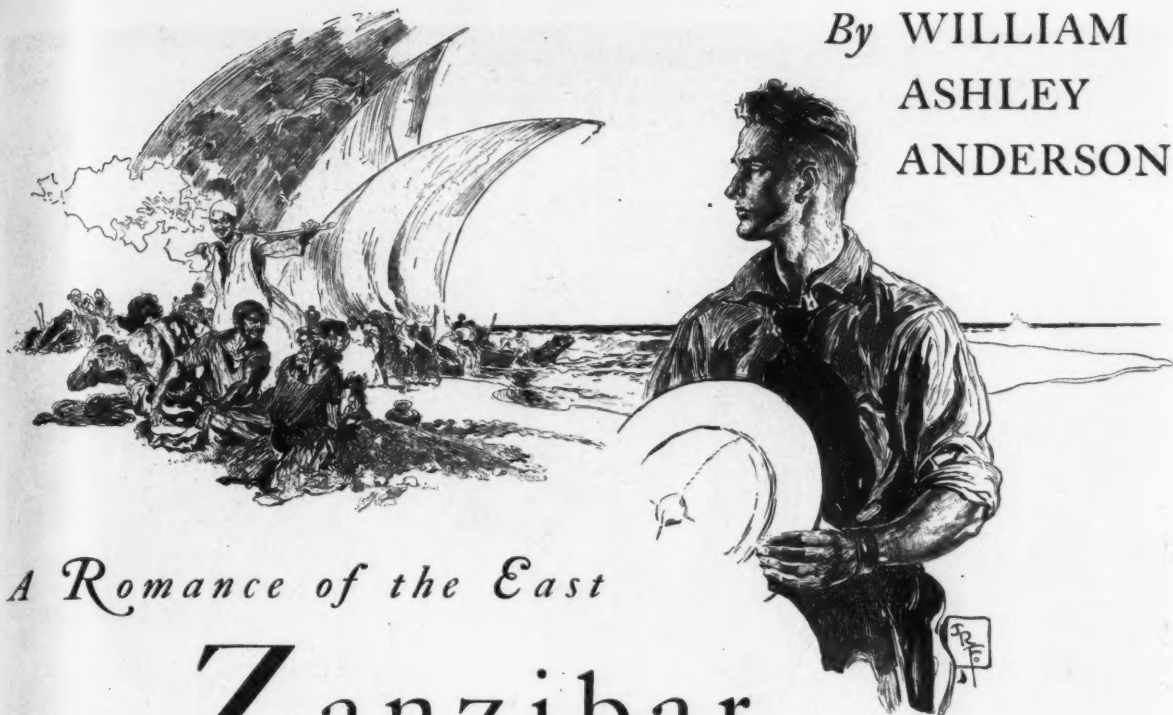
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By WILLIAM
ASHLEY
ANDERSON



A Romance of the East

Zanzibar

Illustrations by John Richard Flanagan

THE first night after my arrival in Zanzibar I received a "chit" from Briggs, manager of the Afro-American Trading Company, inviting me to have dinner with him.

I found Briggs's place to be a huge rectangular Arab pile, rising in the moonlight as though chiseled out of salt above the western roadstead of Zanzibar. The narrow alleyway leading to it was black, dank and tortuous, and saturated with the pungent perfume of cloves and the moldy sweet smell of sacked copra heaped in the godowns along the waterfront. It was three lofty stories high, and fronted upon a glistening white coral beach where a couple of tall, slim betel palms rustled their dainty fronds. The entrance from the alleyway was under a sunken arch and through a massive black door studded with iron below and intricately carved above. The narrow dark stone stairway, worn by generations of shuffling sandals, ascended straight to the *barasa* of the third story.

Here I arrived at seven o'clock, ushered in by black, doddering, gentle old Mzee, an ancient Swahili retainer of the house.

Breathing that balmy spiced atmosphere, ascending those worn stairs surrounded by the whispering shadows awakened by Mzee's yellow lantern, and coming out at last breathless from the climb upon a broad *barasa* whose arches opened upon the roadstead of Zanzibar where the dim outlines of freighters were emphasized by points of red, yellow and green light, and where brown and tattered Arab dhows drifted by like shadows, the sheer romance of the place was bound to grip any man's heart.

It caught mine particularly, because I had just come from two years of life in Aden, that barren, God-forsaken, broiling promontory that juts out into the sea from southwestern Arabia, and smells of nothing but cinder dust, hides and sewage.

I stood for a moment, therefore, looking into the darkness towards the mainland of Africa, and listened to the faint strains of the Sultan's band playing "La Paloma." Briggs was not yet in, and I had nothing to do but wait. So I stood listening with half closed eyes, until my sentimental reverie was broken by a harsh affected cough farther along the *barasa*.

There was a young man there, half in the shadows, stretched upon a long Indian chair, surrounded by a pile of American magazines. He was looking at me uncertainly as though shaken out of an abstraction by my sudden appearance.

"Hodie!" said I. "Is Briggs around? I believe I'm expected here for dinner this evening."

"Yes. So Mr. Briggs said."

The young fellow rose to his feet, and I saw that he was a well formed specimen of collegian. With his chin slightly tilted and his deep-set blue eyes glowing with an expression of candor and almost of simplicity, he gave the appearance of a man who is honest but overbearing, good hearted but impatient, boyishly sardonic and equally gullible. He was obviously new to the country, as yet unspoiled, and, to judge by his magazines and secluded situation, very homesick.

"Are you his assistant?" I asked, shaking hands and taking a chair.

"Yes."

"Have you been in Zanzibar very long?"

"Three months."

"I suppose you like it. It's the finest place I've seen south of Suez. They call it the Paris of the East Coast, you know."

"Yes—oh—yes."

"Do you go out into the bazaar very much?"

"Not very much."

"Are you shipping many cloves this season?"

"A fair lot."

By this my emotion was getting the better of me. I couldn't tell whether the young fool was being intentionally rude or simply stupid. Smiling in the friendliest way possible, I said:

"You've got a beautiful place here. I hope I manage to get something like it. Restful, too, with the waves breaking all the time right under your walls—like music."

"One of the men here went crazy from that."

"Is that so?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"He listened to it so much he got so he couldn't hear anything else."

After a moment's silence I said deliberately, looking at him coldly: "It's a tall ship!"

He flushed slowly; then, without a word to the expectant Mzee, who, trained by a long roll of hosts, was waiting patiently in the shadows to be called, he walked into the dining room, got a tray, a bottle of whisky, a bottle of tepid soda and a single glass. This he brought out and presented to me.

"I don't know how Mr. Briggs handles these things," he apologized; "but maybe you can mix it yourself."

Then he suddenly realized that Mzee was waiting, and he called for a bottle of lemonade. I drank my whisky and soda



with a grimace. It was flat and warm, and gave me a feeling of biliousness.

Shrill piercing voices broke out from the dark recesses of the jumbled confusion of nearby buildings. There was a muffled scream—and a crash. My young entertainer whirled about, listening, startled.

There was a hubbub at the lower doorway, a rush of feet, and Briggs appeared on the *barasa*, calm, unruffled, pert, his tip-tilted nose emphasizing the impudence of his gray eyes.

"Hello!" he said gaily, advancing with outstretched hand. "Cheerio! You're right on the minute. Boy! Bring some whisky and soda. And ice! B-r-h-h! Good Lord, Prescott, you haven't been offering him that warm dishwater, have you? Here, I want you to meet the Only Other American."

The O. O. A. was in a perspiration from trying to catch up with Briggs. He arrived at the top of the stairs, panting slightly, with a reproachful expression on his full genial countenance. He arrived with a protest, but upon seeing me turned it into a laugh and greeted me heartily.

"Briggs," he explained, "is one of those young devils whose idea of a joke is to upset the bazaar and then leave his friends behind to make explanations."

"Nonsense," said Briggs indignantly.

"Well—"

The O. O. A. was interrupted by the shrill voice of an angry woman shouting Briggs's name on the stairway. Briggs darted down. My previous entertainer was again introduced by the O. O. A., this time as Earl Prescott, the grandnephew of Abraham Prescott, original founder of the Afro-American Trading Company, and better known along the coast as Ibrahim Effendi.

"Did you ever hear of him?" asked the O. O. A.

"Vaguely," said I.

"Why, he is as famous in Zanzibar as Tippoo Tib! He was the man who fought the battle of Shangani. Ibrahim Effendi was

one of those half piratical skippers who traded in anything from opium to black ivory. He made a fortune in the Orient and doubled it here in Zanzibar. You know how those old-time skippers were—lords of their own ships, they lorded it over everybody and everything. He always got what he wanted! Well, one day he saw a girl of the Sultan's harem coming from the bath. Whether she was actually one of his harem or just a member of his household, I don't know. And no one knows how he managed first to see her or get in communication with her. He must have spent thousands of rupees; and he had an interpreter he could depend on—old Ali Beder, one of the richest merchants in the bazaar today."

"I know of him," said I. "He has a branch in Aden."

The O. O. A. paused for an instant to listen to the sounds of an hysterical conversation going on on the stairway.

"That's so. Well, one night he tried to steal her away, and they very nearly caught him. He had two ships in harbor, and most of the sailors were ashore, all carrying the old-fashioned short cutlasses. They say they fought for three hours, roaring up and down the bazaar from here to Shangani, over the creek and back again into this very *beyt*. Downstairs, where Briggs is standing, old Ibrahim Effendi held the doorway himself until his sailors got down over the roof there and reached their boats. They dragged him into his gig, bleeding from a couple of bullet wounds and cuts from *jambeers*."

"I never heard of that!" said young Prescott indignantly.

"Well, that's what happened, anyway."

"He never brought any Arab woman back to Boston!"

"He never took her away from Zanzibar, either, so far as that goes. It was all he could do to take himself away. This building was looted completely. There was the devil of a time over it.



A yell went up: "Christians!" It seemed as if the entire frenzied bazaar were surging down upon us.

The American consul called for the assistance of a warship that was at Mombasa; then, after he investigated, he changed his mind and wanted Ibrahim Effendi captured and put under arrest. But they couldn't prove anything. Ibrahim cruised around the island for three weeks, until the consul sent him definite orders forbidding him to land in Zanzibar again; and he never came back."

"What became of the woman?"

"No one knows exactly. Some say she was killed in the fight. She did not return to the harem, anyway; and she didn't get away with Ibrahim Effendi. Prescott, do you mean to say you never heard that story about your granduncle?"

"No," said Prescott, picking his magazines from the floor and stacking them neatly upon a table. "I always understood that he was a sort of missionary-trader. The only thing he ever said to me about Zanzibar was just before I left New York, when my mother asked me to visit him and get some advice about living conditions out here."

crowd of niggers, Hindus and sailors. Well, that held me for a while. A couple of nights later I asked Mr. Briggs if there wasn't something more interesting we could see in the town. 'Oh,' he said, 'you want to see some life, don't you?' So he said he'd show me a 'Zanzibar dance of the finest.' I went with him down the worst tin pan alley I ever saw until we came to a dirty stucco building that was almost falling down. Inside it was black and stuffy. They put a lot of smoking kerosene lamps around for footlights, and some sweaty black wenches came out and danced the shimmy. Well, when it comes to nautch dances and that sort of thing I want something pretty—like the dances you see in the shows in New York. So that held me for a while."

At this point a repentant wail came up the stairway:

"But, Briggsey, I thought it was *you* broke the door. Some blighter barged in and out again so fast I couldn't see him—and he smashed my door—and I haven't got any money to mend my house—it's my house, too——"

"What does he look like?" asked the O. O. A. with interest.

"Why, of course he's a pretty old man now; he's bent over a little bit, and carries a heavy walking stick; but he was probably good looking when he was young. He has deep-set blue eyes under bushy eyebrows, and his face is weather-beaten and—and grim. He looks like—well, he's got a sort of passionate face, like a fanatic's. He said—well, he told me I wasn't the man for Zanzibar, but he'd like to see what I could do out here. He said the people of Zanzibar were a lot of immoral, treacherous cutthroats!"

"Ah," said I, "and you were disappointed."

"Not disappointed exactly, but awfully disgusted."

"You should have seen Aden!"

"I saw Aden. It's got character to it. It's like a hard fighting man, with a lot of scars on him. But this place is soft and insipid."

The O. O. A. and I exchanged glances. I realized at once that I had misjudged young Prescott.

"Have you seen very much of it?" I asked.

"Enough. The first night here Mr. Briggs took me to the movies—movies in a wet tent of rotting canvas—scratched films twelve years old—and a hot sweating

A mysterious voice rose sonorously in the darkness above the housetops, repeating in impassioned accents:

"Ah, ma princesse! Ma princesse! Je t'adore! Ma princesse!"

"That," said young Prescott parenthetically, "is Briggs's rival—a man from Mauritius who sings away for hours every night—recites poetry—plays the guitar—to Briggs's Rose-Marie, a Seychelles girl; she's the one downstairs—while she gets Briggs half tight on whisky and sodas, and swears back at the coon. That's romance!"

"It all depends upon the point of view," I suggested.

"I know that," said Prescott. "The fellow from Mauritius looks up and sees Rose-Marie on a balcony, screened by palm

trees, and her voice sounds soft in the distance; while Briggs goes up the back stairs, five steps at a time, and quarrels over whether the soda water ought to be kept on ice or the ice broken up and put in the glasses!"

"Cheerio," said Briggs, appearing once more on the *baraza*. "Mzee! Dinner! That Rose-Marie's getting to be an awful vixen. What are you looking so gloomy about, Prescott?"

Prescott grunted noncommittally.

"Prescott," continued Briggs, "doesn't appreciate romantic Zanzibar."

"No," said Prescott deliberately. "I guess I don't. I'm a white man, and my idea of romance hasn't quite as much color in it as Briggs's!"

"Well, by the Lord," said Briggs, stung by the retort, "your granduncle didn't have the same scruples!"

"As to that," I volunteered, having just come from Arabia, "I understand that the girl Ibrahim Effendi was interested in was an Arab; and, racially, Arab and Jew are the same—that is, just as white as you or I."

"Not in Zanzibar!" retorted Briggs. "According to Mohammedan law a child takes after its father. If he's an Arab, the child's an Arab, no matter whether his mother is a Swede, an albino or an alligator!"

"That argument doesn't hold," insisted Prescott doggedly. "Anyway, from what I know of my granduncle, I'll bet he showed discrimination."

"No doubt," said Briggs. "Why don't you go and ask Ali Beder about it? He'll be able to give you information we can't."

"By Jove," said I, struck by a suspicion, "that's an ideal. If you're looking for romance, Ali Beder ought to be able to supply you. Adventure won't come to you while you're stretched in an armchair. Adventures," I added sententially, "come to the adventurous!"

"I met Ali Beder long ago," said Prescott impatiently. "He's just what you said—an elderly Jew—and the only adventure I've seen so far is in trying to keep him from cheating on the weight of cloves. If you think there's anything interesting in him, come down tomorrow and I'll introduce you."

"Taken!" I said. "Tomorrow morning, then, at ten o'clock."

"Cheerio!" cried Briggs, filling the glasses. "Bottoms up! We'll drink to old Ibrahim Effendi, the greatest adventurer on the East Coast—and his lost love. His spirit," he added ironically, waving his glass towards Prescott, "his spirit goes marching on!"

At ten o'clock the following morning, having arranged my affairs with the bank and fixed temporary headquarters at the Tippoo Tib Hotel, I met young Prescott and his Arab interpreter and broker, Abu Nawass, and together we went into the bazaar to see Ali Beder and inspect the cloves which Briggs had recently bought from him.

This Abu Nawass was an Arab from Oman, and a very remarkable person.

He was handsome, grave and courteous in his manner, with eyes that could flash fire or melt with laughter. He wore the conventional Arab costume of Zanzibar—a small drab turban; a long white cotton *kanza* with a short sleeveless jacket; and a sash from which protruded the hilt of an ornamental but



Old Ali Beder—friendly, benign, but with something sinister beneath the exterior.



Slim and strong, ardent and young—the most exquisite creature I had seen in years.

dangerous *jamber*. His feet were thrust into sandals and his sleeves were rolled up to the elbow, disclosing powerful hairy forearms. A small crisp mustache and small strong teeth that flashed when he smiled gave an impression of strength and virility. Since he spoke English well, and I spoke Arabic, we made congenial companions.

Abu Nawass and Earl Prescott afforded an interesting contrast.

Judging from Prescott's own description, there was more than a suggestion of old Ibrahim Effendi about the young

man's countenance, the lean strong body and the shock of sandy hair that was pushed back roughly from his forehead; but he gave the appearance of being still unsophisticated and untried.

The Arab, on the other hand, looked thoroughly sophisticated and untameable.

As we made our way down a narrow, tortuous, stone-paved alley, dark and humid, I breathed luxuriously the sickeningly sweet smell of copra and the spicy (Continued on page 120)

"Yo-Ho-Ho and A Bottle of Rum"

Words and Pictures by J. M. W. Turner

THE time is the present. A man in white tropical clothes is seated in a long canvas chair which accommodates itself gratefully to the curves of his back.

In his lap lies an open book bound in time-worn leather. The title page proclaims it to be: "A general History of the Robberies and murders of the most notorious Pyrates and also their Policies, Discipline and Government from their first Rise and Settlement in the Island of Providence in 1717 to the present year 1724."

He has just been reading of the thrilling exploits of those doughty gentlemen who made these Bahaman waters their rendezvous—Captains Avery, Martel, Bonnet, Thatch, Vane, Rackam, England, Davis, Roberts, Worley, Lowther, Low and Evans—names that curdled the blood two centuries ago.



of rum" stirs many a mild and gentle soul to vain regrets on the peaceful life he has led.

Why this strange glamour about pirates? The man in the canvas chair looks off and wonders.

There's a gentle rustle of the palms as they wave in the trade wind: The long curve of creamy beach, the subdued murmur as the rollers crash on the reef, the sunlit sea and the big white clouds make a setting which invites day-dreaming.

They were not nice men, those old time pirates. Then why their fascination? One of them, possessed of an ambition to make him-

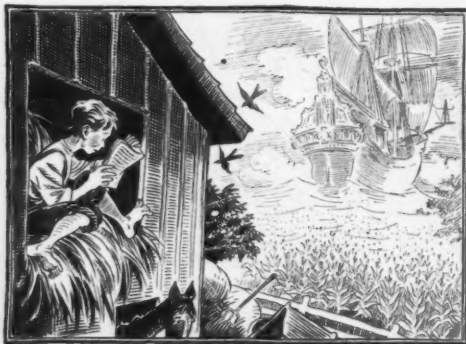
self renowned for being terrible, put the whole crew of a Spanish ship to death, performing himself the office of executioner by beheading ninety men. He caused the crews of four other vessels to be thrown into the sea, and "more than once, in his frenzies, he tore out the hearts of his victims and devoured them."

You would certainly not consider this gentleman a model for emulation, yet he is one of the central figures in pirate lore.

But when you read that one of them, a valiant cuss, put out with eight-and-twenty men in a longboat, boarded a great Spanish warship after scuttling his own boat that there might be no retreat, and succeeded in capturing the ship, you must confess to a certain sneaking admiration.

Another pirate leader, with a handful of men, ran boldly into the midst of a pearl fleet, attacked the vice-admiral under the guns of two men-of-war, and captured the ship.

Such exploits so dwarf the everyday orneryness of the pirate that we forget he was a villain who went around murdering and had dirty finger nails. Doubtless the gallant old pirate is a much pleasanter companion when embalmed in the pages of a book. Down the vista of two or three hundred years he may slash his way gloriously to fame, but if he lived in the next block you'd want him put under bonds.



Two hundred years ago the Bahamas were a pirate stronghold. The sloops and galleys of the sea-rovers lay in these very waters, were careened on these beaches and set forth across yonder horizon, beyond which they ravaged the plate ships and galleons that lumbered up from the rich ports of the Spanish Main.

Time has woven a pleasant glamour about the sea-rovers of that distant day. Their shocking brutalities are screened by a friendly veil and they are invested with deathless heroism.

The country boy in the haymow reads with a thrill the story of the pirates. When he is not aspiring to be a clown in a circus, or the keeper of a candy store, he is quite likely to be thinking of piracy as a promising career.

Children edge forward in their seats, with eyes shining, as Hook and his pirate gang swagger and slash their way through the delightful scenes of "Peter Pan." The story "Treasure Island" has an appeal which few are too old or too young to feel. "Fifteen men on a dead man's chest, Yo-ho-ho and a bottle



The man in the white suit yawned and bewailed the death of romance.

Off across the island, through the stately columns of towering palm trees, a stretch of blue sea lay like a band of sapphire, with the hills of New Providence and the houses of Nassau beyond. Close under the lee of the island, the masts of a schooner appeared. Presently it came to anchor.

"Another bootlegger," thought the man. "That makes sixteen this week." Swinging his field glasses over his shoulder he walked two miles down the shore and seated himself under a palm tree to inspect the new arrival.

She was a trim craft, low and rakish, similar in type to several of the others. All were painted black, even the steamer and the big three-masted schooner. They lay in the snug anchorage where two hundred years before other craft had lain protected by the coral ridges of the island.

Once more the man in the white suit was stirred to imaginings. This was the cradle of the traffic which has led to diplomatic



A Bottle of RUM"

JOHN T. McCUTCHEON

controversy between the premiers of two great nations. This was the fountainhead of the new industry of rum running which has grown to such gigantic proportions.

"Who knows?" he mused. "Perhaps romance is not dead. Perhaps we need only the perspective of time to appreciate properly this new crop of seafaring men who live by devious ways. Already the rum running industry is building up its literature of daring deeds and sudden death. There are rakish craft, secret rendezvous, hidden coves, vast profits and corrupted officialdom. The same as in the days of the pirates."

He focused his glasses on the nearest schooner, three hundred yards away. She was long and black, her masts stepped back jauntily, her bow clean-cut.

A launch from Nassau appeared in the Narrows and chugged out to her. Presently a number of men were hoisting sacks of liquor on board, each sack containing six quart bottles. No liquor is sent to the United States coast in cases. In time the cargo would be embarked and stowed until her freeboard would grow less and less with the weight of the cargo. Then, in the darkness, she would silently steal away.

The clearance papers would consign the cargo to a port near Newfoundland, but at a certain point stress of weather would conveniently blow the craft up to the three mile limit near New York. She would be expected. All would be arranged and swift motor boats would come out for the contraband.

Perhaps there would be a battle with federal officers who still take their oath of office seriously—more likely the way would be greased with tribute judiciously placed in the hands of complacent local officials. There might be some killing.

Will the writers of the future find a heroic theme in this industry? Will little boys, snuggled in cozy haymows, read

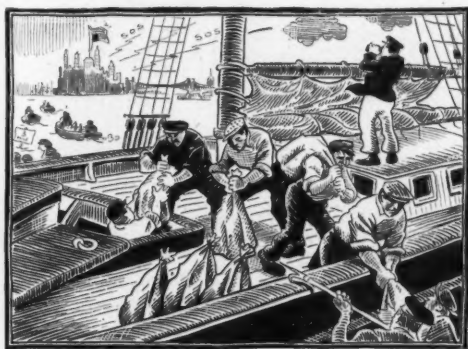


bond. To a colony which has been poverty-stricken, this sudden accession of prosperity has been most welcome, even though the colony takes no pride in being the center of a questionable traffic.

The various prizes of Captain Henry Morgan—later Sir Henry Morgan—one of the most successful of the pirates, stand as follows: The sacking of Panama, \$1,500,000; Porto Bello, \$800,000; Puerto Principe, \$700,000; Maracaibo and Gibraltar, \$400,000; various piracies, \$250,000; a grand total of \$3,650,000 as the harvest of plunder.

In these days the bootleg traffic in the United States is rated at \$3,000,000 a day. Those pirate profits seem mere chicken feed.

Far beyond the rum fleet, upon one of the hills of New Providence, stood the watch tower of the famous pirate Blackbeard, to whom murder was a mere appetizer in his daily life.



Old Blackbeard is gone but his soul goes marching on. Perhaps there may be one leading spirit among the rum runners of today who sometime in years to come will be invested with the glamour that now surrounds the pirate chief. Who knows? Perhaps there will come to be a bootleggers' flag, corresponding to the Jolly Roger. Perhaps a gallant standard showing a boot rampant—indicating something with a kick in it—on a field of red, the red signifying the predominating color of the product.

"Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum" could serve admirably as the anthem of the modern Brothers of the Coast. For a letterhead, why not a rakish schooner anchored under the Statue of Liberty, who is posed in the attitude of calling the waiter?

The man in white put up his glasses and strolled leisurely back, leaving to posterity the job of finding glamour in the exploits of "Ralph the Rum Runner" or "Three Star Dick, the King of the Bootleggers."

with shining eyes the epics of the bootleggers? Will those distant chroniclers tell of governors and other officials sharing the rich dividends of the traffic as we now read of the Governor of the Carolinas sharing the spoils of the pirate chieftains in return for protection and immunity?

It is a fruitful field for speculation, and the man in white looked off across the swaying spars of the bootleg fleet to the distant city of Nassau, smiling in the sunshine of her matchless climate. Thrice has she flourished on waves of prosperity. Once when the pirates anchored their ships in her harbor and scattered their ill gotten spoils on the strand; again when the blockade runners of the Civil War made the harbor their rendezvous; and now when the fleet of fifty vessels in the rum running traffic has brought a flood of wealth to the community.

From a modest beginning in 1920, the import duties in spirits have leaped to half a million dollars a month—twenty-four shillings a case for every case that comes in, and the bootlegger must pay this before the government releases the liquor from



LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE'S

The Lone Wolf Returns



The Setting:

THE action of the story takes place mainly in the New York of today and concerns:

MICHAEL LANYARD, THE LONE WOLF, once prince of European jewel thieves, now a member of the British Secret Service on leave of absence in America.

EVE DE MONTALAIS, whom he loves as he has never loved before—a woman of beauty, of charm, of wealth.

MORPHEW, powerful New York bootlegger and director of criminals.

PAGAN, a satellite of Morpew's.

MALLISON, gentleman crook and member of Morpew's crew.

LIANE DELORME, demi-mondaine and one-time underworld acquaintance of the Lone Wolf.

MRS. FOLLIOTT MCFEE (FOLLY), a society woman, piquant, rich.

CRANE, New York detective, an old friend of Lanyard's.

A Résumé of Parts One to Three:

ALTHOUGH the Lone Wolf has given up thieving he knows himself still a marked man. Yet he is determined to make his life so blameless that he can marry Eve de Montalais. At the outset, fate seems to be against him.

For one night after he has left Eve and she has accorded him his first kiss, he accidentally meets Liane Delorme and, talking over old times, accompanies her to the fashionably disreputable Clique Club. She introduces him to Morpew and his crew, and to Folly McFee.

Morpew has been awaiting this chance. Alone, he proposes that Lanyard take up his old trade again, under his, Morpew's, powerful protection. Lanyard angrily refuses, whereupon Morpew threatens to "plant" crimes on him.

Lanyard is at this moment ready to do Morpew physical violence when the Clique Club, which the latter owns, is raided.

Helped by detective Crane, whom he has not seen in years, Lanyard manages to escape, along with Mrs. McFee.

Her he accompanies home, and is warning her of the nature of Morpew's gang when Liane and Pagan call. Pagan mixes highballs and gives one to Lanyard. Then by adroit conversation he manages to fix in Lanyard's mind the suggestion that he, Lanyard, may at any time go to thieving again through the subconscious power of old habits too strong for his control.

Going home that night, Lanyard is apparently under the spell of some powerful drug. He is hardly able to reach his bed. Next morning he is awakened with a terrific headache by none other than Crane, who informs him that during the night Folly's emeralds have been stolen. Crane has already searched Lanyard's clothing and exonerates him of the crime.

But after Crane leaves, Lanyard finds the jewels in the tail pocket of his own dress coat.

Drugged by Pagan, did he steal them unconsciously as Pagan had diabolically suggested he might? Or were they "planted" on him? He cannot tell.

At any rate, he decides on prompt reprisal. Going to Folly's house, he lets himself in unobserved, and hides in a clothespress upstairs. Folly is entertaining Liane, Pagan and Mallison at dinner. Mallison is called to the phone. Lanyard listens in on an extension, and is at once aware that a plot is afoot against Folly. He quietly phones for Crane.

Mallison then leaves under pretext of a forgotten engagement. Shortly he sneaks in again, comes upstairs and conceals himself in Folly's room.

There, when her other guests have gone, Folly, dressed in negligé, is suddenly seized and kissed by the man, who forthwith proceeds again to make violent love to her. She struggles and is about to scream for help when there is a commotion at the front door below. Lanyard steps out of concealment, seizes Mallison, and floors him with a tremendous blow.

Then there appears at the stair head a bepainted female, a "shyster" lawyer and a fake detective, who have forced their way in. The female brazenly announces herself as Mallison's wife—Folly has quite evidently been "framed" for blackmail.

Lanyard coolly calls their bluff. And as things are about to get lively and a struggle seems imminent, Crane appears with a policeman. Smoothly, and with Folly's silent if astonished concurrence, Lanyard fabricates a story to the effect that he and Folly had planned to trap Mallison as the stealer of her jewels. Mallison, who has meanwhile come to, protests violently and tries to escape; whereupon he is seized and frisked by Crane.

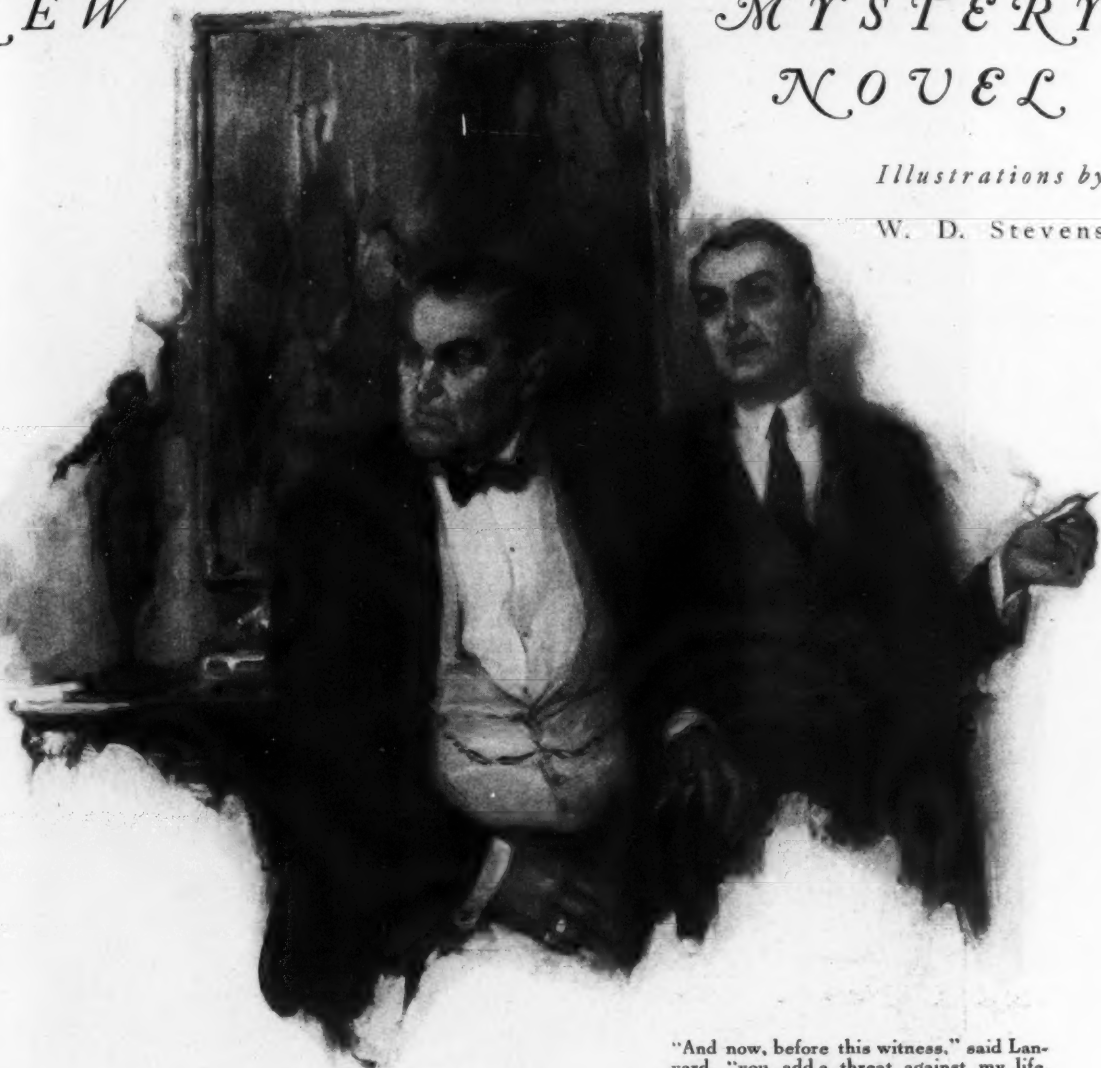
And in his pockets are found: first a burglar's kit; then the stolen emeralds of Folly. Lanyard gives a graphic start and stare. The eyes that Mallison turns toward him are a murderer's.

NEW

MYSTERY
NOVEL

Illustrations by

W. D. Stevens



"And now, before this witness," said Lanyard, "you add a threat against my life. It's more than I hoped for, Morpheus."

Part Four: CHAPTER XI

"PRETTY!" The chuckle with which Crane let that priceless hoard cascade, clashing, a stream of baleful green fire, into the cupped, eager hands of its owner, ended the hush which had spellbound the assorted actors. "Me," he pursued in high contentment, "I'm convinced! Now if you'll slip your wrist-warmers on our little friend here, the dancing yegg, we'll blow, Hoffmeyer . . . But let's see—I guess Mrs. McFee would just as leave not treat the neighbors to a sight of a patrol wagon boiling up to her front door at this time of night and carting this gay bunch away—it might look sort of funny. So, if it's all right with you, ma'am, I'll just get your butler to breeze out and rustle a brace of taxis. And then, folks"—his tolerant regard embraced Mallison, his *soi-disant* wife, her counsel and the disgusted collaborator of this last—"we'll all go riding round to the House with the Green Lamps in East Fifty-first."

Neither did argument, expostulation, abuse and threats more or less unveiled budge him from adherence to this program, to which one prisoner alone entered no objection: in disgrace with fortune, Mallison demonstrated at least the wit of silence. Nothing he said was ever to be used against him at his trial, for he said nothing. What, indeed—he must have reasoned—was the use? What possible profit to him could accrue through his protesting that the case against him was a "frame-up," that Lanyard must wickedly have made him an involuntary receiver of stolen goods at some time during their struggle? The other contents of his pockets provided evidence too ruinous as to his

character and secret shop to give such a claim a ghost of a show of winning credence.

So Mallison submitted without any murmur; but the attention with which he enveloped Lanyard to the last left that one in no doubt as to his mind; and one less self-reliant might well have trembled to think that next morning at latest would see the man free, "out on bail," with every facility at his command to further plans for vengeance—else one had either overrated the power and prestige of Morpheus or wronged that one in crediting him to Mallison in the rôle of patron.

The beck of Folly's head was brusque, in deference to which Lanyard found himself finally closeted with her alone in her study. The temper in which she shut the door was openly one of direct impatience: his most disarming smile was wasted on the face she showed him, with its lips taut, brows level and eyes uncompromising. To the "Well?" with which she chose to prompt him in a voice too cool for comfort, Lanyard returned a deprecating shrug.

"Well enough thus far, if you like; but this is far from the end . . . I wonder, is it waste of time to beg a service of you, madame?"

The even brows contracted, his impudence earned the blank demur: "I don't know whether I ought!"

"After all," he submitted, "madame has again her emeralds . . ."

"And you to thank—I know. But still—"

"And she retains that intangible something which is worth nothing till it is lost; I refer to her—as we absurdly say—good name."



The man lay in a sprawl. "I just don't know how he worked it to get like this," protested the manager.

"Haven't I proved my appreciation by letting you lie like a . . ."

Folly faltered, at loss for a figure, and Lanyard gravely suggested: "Like—I trust very truly—a gentleman."

"Well!" Her sense of humor wasn't proof against that, the efforts failed that she had been making to reestablish the poise of impartiality he had already shaken, she twinkled outright. "And I loved you for it and lied like a baggage in your support. Still, I think you owe me something more . . ."

"The explanation which I am as ready to make as you are to hear it, but a strange story—"

"I can imagine."

"Forgive me if I doubt that . . . A story so strange it will hardly seem credible without the testimony of one little likely to be suspected of bias in my favor—I mean Monsieur Morphew—"

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"Morphew!"

Lanyard pretended not to know he had managed to stagger her a second time: "If you would be so gracious as to telephone the good man—one assumes you know his number—"

"But Morphy's *never* at home in the evening!"

"For all that, I venture to prophesy he will be found at home this evening, and not far from the telephone, either—providing you call him without too much delay."

"Morphew?" Folly reechoed as if she mistrusted even her own ears.

"You are such great friends, he won't think it strange if you turn to him for friendly offices in your distress—"

"But I'm not in any distress!"

"Precisely there is the favor I would beg of you, madame; to make believe you are, to tell Monsieur Morphew that something so distressing has just happened, you cannot rest without his



"If you don't mind having him carried indoors," said Lanyard. "I'll make an examination myself."

advice. If you will do that, I think you will find him more than willing to oblige you, to wait on you here with all possible expedition."

"But what on earth—"

"That I will make clear when you have telephoned. If you put it off until the Mallison lot is permitted to call in counsel and arrange for bondsmen, you won't catch Monsieur Morpheu at home."

Lanyard endured gracefully the probe of dubious eyes—only a whimsical twitch of lips reminded Folly at length of his exemplary patience; whereupon she did a good descriptive bit with pretty shoulders and plumped herself down at the telephone.

Committing to memory the number she gave the Central operator, Lanyard saw the woman start sharply when the voice that responded bore out his prediction that Morpheu would be found anomalously at home, this night of all nights. But the ability of an excellent amateur actress which Folly had once

before proved to Lanyard's delight this time again stood her in good stead; he was fain to admit he himself might have been taken in by the ring of sincerity in her tremulous accents.

"Is that you, *really*, Morphy? Oh, I'm so glad! . . . Something terrible has happened, Morphy. Please don't ask questions now, I don't want to talk about it over the wire, but if you can possibly spare a minute, come around and give me your advice. You're the wisest man I know, and I'm in a peck of trouble, half out of my mind with worry . . . How perfectly sweet of you! Yes, as soon as you can, I'll be waiting so anxiously . . ."

Without rising, Folly swung round and mutely challenged Lanyard to make good his promise. But he merely bowed the bow that signifies "Thank you very much."

"Morphy says he won't be a minute."

"I take it, then, he doesn't live far away?"

"Only a few blocks."



Lanyard's fist glanced upon the fellow's jaw with sufficient weight to dislodge him.

"Figure to yourself, madame, that one can with difficulty constrain oneself to wait."

"That's no fair." Folly got up with a flounce. "You're not telling me anything."

"There is so little time—and one feels sure madame will need all of it if she means to remedy what one may, without intending an impertinence, be permitted to term the quite too delightful unconventionality of her attire."

Not in the least displeased, Folly demanded: "Are you complaining?"

"I am seeking delicately to suggest it would be a pity to give Monsieur Morphew any excuse for jumping at a conclusion which, however flattering to my unworthy self, might prove difficult to correct, not to say painful . . ."

"Painful?"

"To him."

"But you aren't a bit fair, you know, to keep on making me like you when you know very well you haven't been playing the game!"

"Madame wrongs me; one can play only such cards as chance deals to one's hand."

"Oh, dear!" Folly sighed. "I'm afraid I'm too impressionable or I'd never trust you at all, with appearances so black for you."

"Innocence," he modestly opined, "is so shining a garment, black appearances can only lend it an enhancing background."

She wavered between a smile and a frown.

"But you have trusted me so far"—judging the moment ripe, Lanyard passed from trifling to earnest entreaty—"surely you can afford to trust me still a little further. I want you out of the way when Soames shows Morphew in—let him say you will be down directly, nothing more—I want Morphew to meet me alone and without any warning. On the other hand, I wish you to hear every word that passes; so all that seems mysterious now will be made clear. While Morphew is busy trying to dissemble

his joy at meeting me so unexpectedly, you will be able to come downstairs without making too much noise——"

"You aren't suggesting that I eavesdrop!"

"Why not? I did as much for you an hour ago—and very much to your advantage, you'll agree. Take my word for it, in this instance you will have even more excuse . . ."

"Heaven knows how you always manage to get round me, but you do." Folly went to the door, but there paused, looking back over her shoulder with provocative eyes, pretty to death as she stood with head perked pertly, her dainty body less hidden than set off by its frothy dishabille. "And it's well for me, I'm afraid," she confided, "if it's true, as Liane says, you're madly in love with another woman!"

She vanished, was heard briefly conferring with the butler in the entrance hall, then scampering up the stairs.

"And well for me!" Lanyard admitted then, with a wry grimace of self-knowledge; and forthwith closed his mind to the troubling concept of Folly as a woman too kindly inclined, a thought it wouldn't do to dally with for weightier reasons than that it was the truth Liane had babbled.

Against this impending interview, whose precarious issue was far too likely to prove one of life or death for Lanyard, he had to make all his dispositions, mental and environmental, in minutes of grace he had no means of knowing how few. Everything depended on how soon Morphew might leave his quarters in response to Folly's call, on whether or not he would learn before

leaving of the reverse which had waited on the Mallison coup. Lanyard asked no longer odds than to have Morpew arrive uninformed and unsuspecting; if he didn't, Lanyard would need to mind his eye, likewise his step, if he meant to go on living . . .

Swift review of four walls and all they enclosed, made careful note of the heavier articles of furniture and their arrangement in respect of one another and even more particularly of the four exits: the door to the entrance hall, the draped opening that communicated with the drawing room, the two French windows that gave upon the roof of the extension.

Wall sconces with shields of painted parchment bathed the study in a glareless glow; these darkened, a shaded table lamp was left for all illumination. And this in its turn having been extinguished, it was feasible to reconnoitre at the windows without risking detection by any spy who might be stationed in the vacant land back of the house. But when Lanyard had gently parted the draperies and put his nose to a pane, his vision spent itself to no profit on the welter of blacks, from dense to dusky, that blotted out the kitchen yard within its wooden walls and the open foundation pit beyond. Footfarers on the sidewalks to the north were well defined by the bleak shine of a street light on the Lexington Avenue corner; but if any living thing lurked in the waste between, it was lost to the cunning of Lanyard's eyes.

Notwithstanding, he watched on, to make sure the avenues of escape were not stealthily

in his toils and soon to become a suppliant to his mercy—no mistake about it, Morpew in this moment was on the best of terms with the business of life in a richly rewarding world. And viewing the man revealed in this humor, Lanyard, ceased to entertain a doubt as to the best course to take with him.

Near the table whose lamp painted with stagey shadows his pale and crudely modeled features, Morpew halted. He cleared his throat importantly, consulted his watch, pricked an ear impatient for Folly's footfalls on the stairs, frowned ever so slightly over failure to hear them, and, tickled by some furtive thought, flashed his rare, unholy smile. Then, becoming cognizant of Lanyard sitting quietly in his corner, watchfully waiting, the man all at once grew taut in body and limb, like a dog confronted by some sudden shape of danger, and wiped his countenance clean of every treacherous trace of legibility. This much, and the swift veer of his eyes toward the doorway, alone confessed the fater to his expectations. The blinkless gaze that steadied to Lanyard's told nothing. Neither did it put any question. Pending the first move, which he was plainly resolved Lanyard must make, Morpew constrained himself to a set of dull, impassive patience.

An attitude Lanyard was nothing loath to humor. If the enemy preferred to resign the initiative, he didn't mind. If it came to that, he had meant all along, if it should appear, as now it did, that Morpew hadn't as yet heard what had happened in the last hour, to force the fighting. He got up and performed his courtliest bow.

"Good evening, monsieur. It was gracious of you to come round so promptly. Won't you be seated?"

Morpew ignored the gesture that singled out a chair for him, but after a measured instant observed rather than asked: "You were expecting me . . ."

"It was even I who advised Mrs. McFee to call monsieur into consultation."

The full, hard lips grudgingly released the monosyllable: "Why?"

"It recommended itself as the simplest way to seduce you into a conversation which I meant to have before morning whether you wanted it or not; furthermore, for me, by far the safest. Figure to yourself how much more secure I feel in my skin, meeting you here, the last place where you would have thought to find me . . ."

Morpew shifted slightly toward the door, a movement of impulse which he seemed to repent when he found Lanyard in the way. "I came here to have a talk with Mrs. McFee," he stated heavily, "at her invitation . . ."

"I have begged her to grant me the favor of a few minutes alone with you."

"I've nothing to say to you . . ."

"That places one of us at a deplorable disadvantage, for I have much to say to you, monsieur, and mean to say it."

"Suppose I don't care to listen . . ."

"It desolates me to feel obliged to inform you that, entirely by chance and contrary to my preference and habit, I happen to be armed."

"Seems to me I've heard"—a slow sneer darkened the face of uncouth ugliness—"it used to be your boast, 'the Lone Wolf never kills.'"

"Monsieur says truly 'it used to be' . . . He will, moreover, wisely remind himself that the Lone Wolf is no more; his code,



picketed in advance of Morpew's call, till the house bell dictated retreat from the window to relight the table lamp and take the place and pose which Lanyard most fancied, in an easy chair screened from the hall by the door that opened inward.

The professional soft shoes of the butler padded from pantry to front door, bolts thumped, the latch rattled, Morpew was heard to salute Soames with gruff condescension, the colorless voice of the servant responded; and having surrendered his hat and coat, the Sultan of Loot paraded into the study with a strut—or the observation of his audience erred—colored by a lively sense of gratification in unction yet to come. With Folly netted

such as it was, is no sure guide to what Michael Lanyard may do when he fights for the right to live his own life in his own way."

Another instant their glances clashed, then Morpew's fell, he turned back sullenly to the table, fumbling, to cover nervousness out of character, for his cigar case. "Well—what do you want?"

Lanyard pushed the hall door to before replying.

"First, to give myself the felicity of telling you the great news."

Eyes beneath leaden lids shifted back to Lanyard's face, a gross hand grossly crusted with diamonds brought to light a cigar case of gold studded with diamonds, but delayed to open it.

"Come, Monsieur Morpew! confess you are wondering what has become of that zealous disciple of yours, Monsieur Mallison."

"What about Mallison?"

But Morpew had found it necessary to moisten his lips before he could speak.

"He is, at the present moment, one has good reason to believe, wildly telephoning about town to get in touch with you and pray for a bondsman to bail him out when he is arraigned tomorrow morning for stealing Mrs. McFee's emeralds."

The pupils of the little, flesh-embedded eyes contracted, Morpew licked his lips again.

"How's that?"

"Your protégé, monsieur, so neatly styled the dancing yegg, was caught hiding in the boudoir upstairs, some fifteen or twenty minutes ago, and arrested."

Morpew gave himself time to assimilate this ill-omened information, bending over the gaudy trinket in his hands and making meticulous choice of a cigar. He gnawed off its end, broadcasted the waste, put the case away, struck a match and through a screen of smoke and flame looked back to Lanyard.

"How'd you manage that?"

"But surely one who couldn't—so simple a matter!—is not one to have been honored with the handsome offer you made me last night."

"I've put you a question," Morpew prompted testily. "I want to know how you managed to put it over on Mally. Afraid to answer?"

"All in good time. For the present, I have the whim to point out what dismal stupidity you have displayed in this affair, to the end that you may spare yourself further discomfiture by foregoing any injudicious schemes of vengeance which may be brewing behind that broad, impassive brow."

"You swing a mean tongue in English," Morpew commented, "for a foreigner." He cast about for a chair sturdy enough to sustain the bulk of him, and with an air of resignation, his first voluntary confession of feeling, sat down. "Go on, get it all off your chest, I don't mind listening."

"Monsieur is too amiable. One can only prove one's appreciation by endeavoring to be brief . . ."

"Take your time. I've got plenty."

"Regard, then, my good Morpew, that last night, in this room, I was drugged."

"Hootch?" Morpew queried sagely, and receiving a nod commented: "There's a lot of wicked stuff being served nowadays."

"Four drinks were mixed for us last night, Morpew, by your man Pagan. The other three were consumed without ill effects. Thirty minutes after drinking the one he gave me, I became unconscious of my actions."

"Never knew a Frenchman yet could hold his liquor like a gentleman."

"No doubt monsieur knows best how a gentleman drinks . . . At the same time, Pagan did his best, by means of hints thinly veiled, to prepare Mrs. McFee to credit me with the robbery which was even then planned in detail."

"Is this a confession you're making?"

"Planned by you, monsieur, and brilliantly executed by your henchman, the dancing yegg."

"If you didn't know what you were doing last night, like you claim, how d'you know you didn't pull the job off yourself?"

"One was waiting for that question, one knew it was sure to come after the preparation Pagan had made for it."

"I notice you don't seem in any sweat to answer it."

"It has been answered for me. With her complaint of the theft, Mrs. McFee communicated to the police the suspicions Pagan had been at such pains to sow in her mind; with the result that my rooms were visited early today, and, like me, searched while I slept."

Morpew took the cigar from between his teeth and with an air of anxiety inspected its half-inch or more of ash. "And nothing found," he inferred incuriously.

"Nothing."

"Can't remember what you did with the stuff, either, I suppose?" The cigar went back to its appointed berth. "Too bad. You must've been stewed as a boiled owl, all right."

"Patience. Tonight, when Mrs. McFee called in the police to arrest Mallison for having sneaked back like the thief he is, after having left this house in the character of a guest and friend, he was searched and found to possess"—Lanyard made provokingly deliberate pause—"a pocket kit of burglar's tools."

"Sounds fishy." Nevertheless, more business with the cigar told of strain to keep up appearances under unrelenting study. "That all your news?"

"But by no means all. Further search proved that Mallison had been guilty of the amazing indiscretion of bringing the emeralds, concealed upon his person, back into the house from which he had stolen them."

Untouched by Morpew's hand the cigar between his teeth dropped its ash. "How do you mean?" he mumbled, watching his fat bedizened fingers brush the gray flakes from the lapel of his dinner jacket. "The emeralds couldn't have been found on Mally unless"—the colorless eyes lifted sharply to Lanyard's face—"unless you put them there!"

"My gifts are small; I am hardly so clever as monsieur flatters me by supposing."

"By God!" Morpew heaved out of his chair in a cold rage of conviction, "you planted the stuff on the boy!"

"But," Lanyard pointed out, his suavity unruffled, "if you are so positive the emeralds were in my possession before they were found on Mallison, the admission is implicit that you had compromising knowledge of the robbery. Else how can you be so sure?"

"I'm satisfied you stole 'em," Morpew growled. "I'm satisfied you planted 'em on Mally for fear they'd be found on you."

"But why?" Lanyard argued as one perplexed but reasonable. "Have you never been mistaken in reading the hearts of those whom you employ? Remember what you must have known about Mallison before you reckoned him skillful and unscrupulous enough to be of use to you. Was it altogether wise, do you think, to trust such a one to resist the temptation to keep for himself the plunder you had set him to steal and bestow on me for my undoing? Was it wise to forget the least miscarriage of the scheme would leave you unable to prove your tool had been false to your trust? Was it wise to believe Mallison too dense to think of that for himself? How can you be sure he didn't put the jewels into his own pocket instead of into mine?"

"See here—" Morpew stammered, equanimity at last shaken beyond dissembling.

"Ah! but there I have you," Lanyard chuckled. "There I touched the heel of Achilles—eh, monsieur?—your vulnerable spot! The truth is, you dare trust nobody; you don't know that Mallison didn't play you false any more than you know now that he won't, when the pinch comes, turn State's evidence and betray you to save himself."

"Get out of my way!" Morpew bit through his cigar and cast it from him with a violent hand. "I've had enough of this, I've stood for about all of your nonsense—"

"By all means, monsieur"—Lanyard politely stood clear of the door—"hasten to the police station and put the fear of God into the heart of this poor thing whom you were fool enough to trust. You haven't a minute to lose if you hope to succeed in stopping the mouths of those four whom the police are even now, doubtless, putting through the third degree—"

"Four?" Morpew checked short in ponderous dismay, his heavy head low between his shoulders and swaying like that of a tormented animal. "Four!"

"Bless my soul! did I forget to tell you? How unpardonably stupid of me. The lady so lost to shame that she openly accuses herself of being Mrs. Mallison, the enterprising Mr. Howlin and his associate Mr. Regan—all stepped with Mallison into the trap you'd set for Mrs. McFee, for the purposes of blackmail, and sprung it on themselves. If you doubt my word you'll find them at the east Fifty-first Street police station."

"If that's true," Morpew rumbled, barely articulate, "if I owe that to you, Lanyard—"

"It is—you do."

"You'll settle with me, you crook—if you hide at the ends of the earth, I'll find you and break you—"

"Ah! Thanks, my good Morpew, many thanks!" Lanyard laughed in high delight. "How (Continued on page 153)"

By ADELA ROGERS ST. JOHNS

The Great God

FOUR-FLUSH

A
Story of an
Artificial
Woman

Illustrations by
Wallace Morgan

IT IS a giant hothouse—Hollywood.

Beneath the blue-green roofs of its glass stages bloom exotic plants lacking only that perfume which honeys in the sunshine of reality.

Orchids and roses and even lilies of the valley grow luxuriantly there, as alluring and as unreal as the mascara on a pretty woman's eyelashes.

Bred under glass. Warmed by the glare of electric lights. Fed on facile emotions that must answer the touch of the director's whip. Seeing in their triple mirrors the intriguing mask of make-up. Hearing the expensive lies of press agents.

The shooting stars of Hollywood who flame into the sky and hold a world spellbound for a time by the sheer brightness of their beauty and the strangeness of their lure.

The curse of artificiality lies heavily upon them.

So heavily often that they dare not drink from the well of experience which alone inspires great art.

They serve a thousand idols of affectation.

Their common daily round is as hectic and as gaudy as the whirl of a merry-go-round.

Flung headlong from a two room flat on the Chicago L. From the drab existence of a Nebraska farmhouse. From the staid coldness of a New England parsonage. From the noisy crowds of Tenth Avenue in New York City. Flung into direct contact with adulation, wealth, fame, position—too many times the tinsel enters the soul of them.

Why, they're only kids—kids without tradition, without background, without training.

Sometimes it intoxicates them into forgetfulness of every law the staid, conventional, everyday world insists upon. Sends them to the very depths of indulgence and mad pleasure. Strips them bare of even a desire to hide their own weaknesses.

Sometimes they forget only what manner of women they really are. They acquire the manner and the pose and the appearance and the habits of polished women of the world. And they cease to consider that, underneath, the little girl who once played in Tenth Avenue lives and breathes and loves and hates.



Gwynne Gunning

was a study in water
colors, by Herself.

Cultivating the smile and the walk and the pout that made them famous. Thinking only in terms of a twenty-four sheet. Seeing only the too alluring present.

Imprisoned by long hours of hard work. Driven by the staring masses of a curious public into a tiny circle where they never meet the cold, invigorating blast of the world's thought. Surrounded by enemies they must placate and friends they must satisfy. Stuffed with flattery, they become the slaves of a Pose.

Like a man who believes his own lies, they grow—these girls—to worship at the shrine of the personality they have built for themselves. To defend it from the world at all costs. To sacrifice everything to it.

Gay, expensive, amazing little houses—built upon quicksand.

Jeweled temples constructed above deep crevices that swell with a silent, unrecognized, purposely ignored torrent of common, human, elemental emotion.

But now and then fate dashes them against the nakedest reality of life. Perhaps only for a moment, but vitally enough to dig into the depths of their spangled souls. And only that test can show whether they have been eaten alive by their own affectations, or whether the soul of a real woman throbs within the irresistible creature they have fashioned for the world to adore.

Whether the Great God Four-Flush rules them beyond hope of redemption, or whether the soil

heritage of their ancestors will sweep away artificialities as a tidal wave sweeps away the puny defenses of civilization.

The answer is always easy to read. For then, they either sink beneath the load of chinchilla and diamonds and press agent lies, into oblivion. Or they give to the screen its moments of great acting.

As she gathered up the scattered books and papers, Mlle. Decourbey sighed just a little. There was something about Gwynne Gunning that always made her sigh.

She was a tall, plain woman, and when she was with Miss Gunning she felt taller and plainer than ever.

It was an impression that Miss Gunning was apt to make upon other women—a conviction that they were blowzy and awkward and heavy beside the Venetian glass perfection of her.

The French teacher adored an instant longer the picture before her. Approved with her own Parisian taste the drape of



Laurine Johnstone,

*with her titled husband. Yes, she was
impressed by Gwynne's dinner party.
And she was very cordial to Gwynne.*

orchid chiffon that swathed the little figure. The richness of the chinchilla rug across the little feet. The gleam of soft, riotous golden curls against black velvet and rose satin.

Perhaps it was all just a little too perfect, for good taste.

But Mlle. Decourbey did not know that Gwynne Gunning had been born on the west side of New York where she could almost hear the shouts from Hell's Kitchen in her cradle. Otherwise it would have seemed amazing enough that Gwynne should come so near to achieving the really elegant thing.

A French doll.

She sighed again. Life, after all, meant very little to a woman without beauty.

Beauty? Shuffling together the papers upon which Gwynne had written her French exercises in a delicate, artificial hand, the Frenchwoman wondered if Gwynne Gunning had beauty.

What did it matter?

She had something without which beauty is an empty cup.

A lure that was molded into every line of her slim body, every sense-stirring contour of her little face.

It was a bit like a play, to teach Gwynne Gunning. You became a character in the drama of herself which Gwynne was always staging—a comedy-drama of four-flush.

With one of those flashes of insight which her long experience of life had given her, the woman wondered if Gwynne had ever had a real emotion. Ever uttered a sincere word. Ever done a natural, unpremeditated thing in all the long months she had taught her. Tried to visualize her sweet insincerity in the grip

of something tremendous. Wondered what she would do in a vital crisis.

And gave it up. Inwardly chuckling as she compared her with another pupil, hard-boiled, reckless, dissipated Aileen Preston, who shouted from the curbstone her impudent motto, "Be yourself." And who said saucily of Gwynne Gunning: "Does she believe all that stuff she pulls? How do they get that way, eh? Always pretending to be something they don't even know what it's all about."

Gwynne Gunning was simply a study in water colors, by Herself.

Mlle. Decourbey tucked the last book under her arm. "Tomorrow at the same time?" she asked.

Gwynne Gunning came back from that delicious dreamland where she had apparently been pursuing beautiful thoughts, and smiled. It was the smile of a great lady. Kind and sweet but with just the necessary touch of hauteur.

"I'm afraid not, mademoiselle." The French teacher suppressed the shudder which Gwynne's French always sent through her. Oddly enough, she had eliminated the Tenderloin twang from her English, but it rasped through every word of French. "I shall be working tomorrow. Come on Saturday, please."

To the maid who came in, Gwynne said: "Jeanne, bring me that copy of Browning I left in the music room last night. I do not wish to be disturbed until four-thirty. Ask my secretary to come then. Mr. Austin is coming to tea at five. And I am dining out. Will you ask Porter to be a trifle more careful about the arrangement of the tea table? Perhaps a few scattered



rose leaves would be nice. I cannot eat unless things are daintily served. And please tell cook that unless I am entertaining I do not care for meat, except chicken or a bit of fish. That is all." The maid nodded seriously. She had no way of knowing that on location, or at hurried, unobserved luncheons Gwynne Gunning might still satisfy a deep yearning for steak and onions, or juicy corn beef and cabbage.

Outside, the afternoon sunshine fought the rolling bank of evening clouds and won to a hue as living and vital as the breath of the sea.

But in Gwynne Gunning's boudoir, the taffeta curtains veiled the windows. Even in her town car, heavy silk curtains shut out the daylight. Daylight made one squint.

Except for the frilly reading lamp above the day bed, the room now glowed only with soft light from brackets of painted candles.

The big day bed stood in the center of a black velvet carpet. About it foamed heaps of cushions, like cream puffs constructed of luscious fabrics. The faintest breath stirred the pastel-tinted ostrich plumes that filled the big gilt basket. A delicate, naked dancing girl blew clouds of incense.

Soul-stifling. Heart-smothering. The narcotic of luxury. Gwynne Gunning relaxed utterly. Her pretense of reading the poems before her ceased. Relaxing was so good for one. It wiped out any little strain, any tenseness of muscle. It sponged off the ghost of a stray smile. Of course Gwynne Gunning never laughed. She had learned that early in the game. Laughter brought wrinkles.

And she never cried. For drops of water wore lines even in stone. And in that soft velvet skin of Gwynne Gunning's they must leave traces that could not be massaged away. No matter how much she longed to indulge in a good, old-fashioned howl. To relieve her clamped soul with unseemly shrieks of mirth, as she and Sadie Fallows used to do of a Sunday afternoon when they strolled up Thirty-fourth Street—no matter how these longings shook her, she indulged them but seldom any more.

The camera is a cruel taskmaster.

Gwynne knew that she lived in the heart of the public only by her loveliness. She had become hardened to the printed repetition of the fact that she could not act. Had no more expression than a wax doll. Was a stunning clotheshorse and nothing else.

Sometimes the clamor of an old, vital ambition to act started her pulses. Sometimes the memories of old dreams—common, honest, girl dreams—crept like wan little ghosts into her idle thoughts. She had wanted earthily to be a great actress once.

But now—she was afraid of emotions. Now she was a lady. And emotions could never be ladylike. She knew that. Besides, they were hideous things. She had decided upon the path she wished to follow.

The domino of a Parisian marquise became her excellently well.

When she came into the drawing room at ten minutes after five to greet Gregg Austin, the bloom of a beauty nap was still upon her.

The pastel train of her tea gown trailed into a stately weight of her favorite chinchilla. Somehow its expensive elegance symbolized all that Gwynne Gunning hoped to gain from life.

The chiffons wrapped her exquisite figure as the petals wrap a rosebud. Austin took in appreciatively the full, firm bust, the supple, slender waist, the round, pointed limbs.

He did not understand her.

Gwynne Gunning challenged the senses as a sunset challenges the eye. Yet having issued that challenge she refused to recognize it.

He could not classify her. Could not be sure whether she was lady or demi-mondaine or merely manikin.

She came across to him with the famous Gwynne Gunning walk—the fierce glide of a panther in the fluffy softness of a kitten—and held out a little hand upon which one big pearl nestled.

"I am glad you have come," she said. "I am upset. Will you have tea or a highball?"

She nodded his order to the butler. And he grinned inwardly at the languid elegance with which she sank into a big chair. If it was a trick, it was a very good trick. He couldn't be sure.

"Miss Garvy has just brought me the New York reviews of my last picture," she said slowly. "I ran it for you here. They have said most unkind things about my dancing costumes. Gregg, I am hurt."

Gregg Austin stood watching her. For almost a month he had been admitting to himself that he was quite mad about her. Admitting it with just the touch of a sneer. It was, after all, well enough to play about with these pretty little picture girls. Well enough to have his own crowd know he enjoyed the freedom of glittering Bohemia when he chose.

He liked, at dinner parties in Mrs. Wallace Higgen Garrett's Montecito palace, to drop a word here and an anecdote there of his intimacy with the great and near-great of filmdom.

Mrs. Garrett herself had scolded him about his interest in Gwynne Gunning when he went to Santa Barbara to play for the golf cup.

He had laughed it off then, and now—now he was wondering. Now he was having to keep the tightest of tight grips on himself. That she would marry him, he was certain. It would be an exceptionally good thing for her in every way. Exactly what she wanted. But he didn't want to marry her if he could help it.

Now he bent down and laid his brown hand on hers. He was very tall. Very distinguished and disagreeable looking. About his temples was already a sprinkling of gray hairs. He lounged, but he did it well. He had the perfect voice and the charming rudeness of his class.

"No one but a woman would say unkind things about your dancing costumes," he said lightly.

Gwynne thanked him with a wistful upward glance. "You are so kind to me, Gregg. But I am afraid they have not understood me. One hates to have one's highest motives misunderstood. One of them actually said I was—indecent. They intimated that I was only using my—my body to put my pictures over. But Gregg, nature is beautiful, isn't it? I have only been trying to present to them on the screen what the Greeks gave the world in their art. The inspiration of the beautiful. I have been studying Greek literature—it was a new word, and she said it deliberately—"and it has formed my ideals."

He was still standing, his tall figure in golf clothes outlined against the great, grilled gates that separated the drawing room from the sunken conservatory. As she rose, he puzzled as a clever interviewer had done only that morning over the source of the thoughts she had expressed so charmingly. Were they really her own?

She put one hand on his coat in pretty appeal. "Gregg, my art is all I live for. I am really very spirituelle. Am I not spirituelle on the screen?"

It was the first time Gregg Austin had ever lost his head.

He let her go before a volley of small, clenched fists—fists that developed claws—claws that scratched. Let her go as her vicious, frantic kicks drummed against his shins.

It was the rage of an alley cat. The spitting, lynx-like venom of women who know no other way to defend the body that is theirs.

"You beast, you keep your dirty hands off me, you hear?" she flamed at him.

"I'm sorry. But I'm a man, you know. No man can be with you day in and day out as I've been and not lose his head."

A shudder shook her. Her face was chalky but the lips had twisted back to their sweet and wistful smile. She lifted a pathetic dignity to her aid, and it was like watching a strong man lift a weight.

"You, my friend!" she said. "That is a side of life I know nothing of. It repulses me. I am too spirituelle for that."

A cynical smile shot across his face. "You mean you've never cared for a man like that?"

Reproachfully she shook her head at him. And it flashed upon him that he had seen her do exactly this scene, even to the exquisite quivering of her white throat, on the screen many times.

But truly this time she could not answer.

She was torn between a desire to give rein to her furious anger at his touch, and a knowledge that she could not.

And she was thinking—seeing—remembering, maddeningly, hatefully.

Thinking of her immigrant mother, that ignorant and beautiful creature who had sold and sacrificed all to many loves. Of the dark, violent boy to whom she herself had given her first kisses. Of the suave, cold man whose gambling house she had helped to brilliant success and who in return had helped her to her first chance.

That girl—little Alma Schwartz—had never really existed.

She—she was Gwynne Gunning. A lady. An exquisite idol. A rich woman. Photographed. Served. She knew nothing of those noisy, dirty, poverty-stricken streets. She came from a little village in the lovely South—her biography said so.

Her voice, when it came, was low and sweet and sincere.

"I'm afraid I never could."

He felt himself baffled. Doubting her absolutely. Yet unable to put his finger on the weak spot. Afraid to call what he sensed was a bluff for fear it just might not be.

"Gwynne, you're fighting away from everything real in the world. You're hiding from life itself."

She only shook her head, lovely blue eyes averted. "I am just myself, Gregg. My director says I shall never be a great actress until I feel and know more of life. But—I don't want it. I love things just the way they are. Please, Gregg, just be my friend."

If marriage was in the back of both their minds, neither brought it forward. Gwynne saw her chance to follow up the scene—her chance perhaps to win from him the question she so much wanted to hear. But she had not the strength to play it out.

For with hasty, nervous fingers, poor little Gwynne Gunning was busy burying anew and deeper than ever that lightning flash of remembrance that had torn through her complacent indolence—and praying that it might never come again.

II

GWYNNE GUNNING swayed in her seat.

With her two hands she gripped violently at the edge of the rough chair in which she sat. The breath had stopped in her throat. Her heart was pounding like some wild thing suddenly uncaged.

Her heart! Her heart that she had schooled to beat so evenly, so surely through life. Oh, why had she come?

She looked fearfully about her, feeling a shamed sense that the wave of color sweeping her from head to foot must be visible to everyone around her.

Then her eyes went again to the ring and stayed there, hungrily, as shyly hot and sweet as the eyes of the simplest woman in the world.

The great roofed arena was almost full of smoke, so that the air she drew frantically into her aching lungs was acrid and harsh.

It was strangely dark about her, like a gulf inhabited by passions and not by people at all. Dark except for that white, raised square of canvas on which the glare of electric lights beat so revealingly.

Never, since childhood days when she had seen street fights, had Gwynne Gunning felt the beat of primitive, elemental emotions that swept her now. The roar of the crowd as the fight went on was like the crash of some giant living thing.

An atmosphere like that *did* things to you.

Why had she come, oh why had she come?

Gregg went to the boxing matches in Hollywood every Friday night. He had tried often before to persuade her. So many women went now. She would see all the stars who worked on her lot, many of her best friends, at the ringside. The arena was owned and managed by the American Legion. The fights were clean and orderly and well conducted. The crowd was high-class. It was a recognized sport now.

Lots of the women he knew came over from Pasadena. In fact, fights were distinctly good form, since the war. Society leaders put on boxing cards for their pet charities.

Anyway, she had come.

It is very hard to hide from life.

The first fights had not particularly interested her. Rather, they had actually seemed slow and stupid to her. She kept the



Gregg Austin—

*the first time he ever lost
his head. Gwynne's was
the rage of an alley cat.*

dainty laces of her scented handkerchief against her lips. Or buried her chin in the familiar warmth of her chinchilla.

And then the crowd had suddenly surged to a cheer, to a wave of affectionate welcome.

Even Gregg, in his superior, patronizing manner, had called out, "Hi, Joe, go get this bird!"

A man behind her was jostling her hat. Standing up and yelling:

"He ain't got a thing on you, ole boy. Remember that right to the stomick."

The figure they hailed, wrapped in a blue bathrobe, sat down on a little white stool in a corner quite close to her.

She had a moment's impression of a wonderfully clean-cut young head. A haughty, indifferent young profile, with a fine, straight nose. A crest of smooth brown hair. A column of throat like a Greek boy's.

"Who is that?" she whispered to Gregg.

"Oh! that's Joe Flynn, the best boy they have here. He's cleaned up every lightweight on the Coast, so they've brought a big card on from New York to fight him. Flynn's got the making of a real scrapper."

Another man came into the opposite corner, a squat, dark fellow with a marred and battered face.

The boy rose, slipped off his bathrobe and eased himself up and down on the ropes.

Suddenly Gwynne Gunning's eyes were filled with a vision. A vision of splendid, rippling shoulders that tapered down into a slim, beautiful waist. A skin that dazzled, white as the fairest woman's. Powerful, tapering arms and a lithe, magnificent grace.

More beautiful, stronger and more perfect than any woman's body could ever be.

"Gee, he's a swell built boy," some man near her said loudly. "Look at them shoulders. Ain't he a (Continued on page 106)

THE HOPE OF Happiness

The Setting of the story is an Ohio city today, and it concerns the lives of:

BRUCE STORRS, a young architect of fine personal character.

FRANKLIN MILLS, his real father, an aristocrat, rich, conservative and influential, though little understood by his fellow citizens.

SHEPHERD MILLS, Franklin's son, a dreamer whose character is the antithesis of his father's, and who is head of a storage battery plant.

CONSTANCE MILLS, Shepherd's wife, a social parvenu, restless and avid of personal admiration.

LEILA MILLS, Franklin's daughter, a favorite child, charming but just now inclined to run wild.

MILLICENT HARDEN, Leila's friend, who has beauty and artistic genius.

"BUD" HENDERSON, an old college friend of Bruce's who is as generous and likable as he is irresponsible.

"BILL" FREEMAN, a prominent architect.

DALE FREEMAN, his wife, whose home is the rendezvous for an intelligent social set.



A Résumé of Parts One and Two:

THE world of Bruce Storrs metaphorically comes tumbling about his ears when his mother confesses to him before she dies that he is not John Storrs's son. Her one lapse in a faithful wedded life had been an impetuous love affair with one Franklin Mills two years after her marriage. Bruce is Mills's son.

After a long walking trip to readjust his views, Bruce obeys his mother's dying request and goes to the Ohio city where Mills lives, to work near him.

There he falls in at once with Bud Henderson and is introduced by Bud to nearly everyone of interest and importance. Through Bud, too, he becomes assistant to Bill Freeman, and at Dale Freeman's house meets his half-brother, Shepherd Mills, and Constance, both of whom take a liking to him, Constance as usual starting a mild flirtation. Bruce, of course, keeps the secret of his parentage to himself.

Later Bruce meets Millicent Harden and his half-sister, Leila Mills, by the process of rescuing them from a motor boat stalled

Shepherd

on the river. Leila is rather the worse for drink. Toward Millicent, who, he learns, is rather out of it socially because her father made his money in patent medicines, he feels a decided attraction.

At a dance this attraction deepens. Millicent introduces him to Franklin Mills, his own father. Both men are deeply and secretly affected, for Mills is at once struck by Bruce's name and appearance and cannot help wondering if the boy is his own son. The feeling begins to haunt

his mind, stirring up old memories of Bruce's mother.

Bruce is again brought to his father's attention when Shepherd Mills gets him to draw up rough plans for a clubhouse he wants to construct for his employees, on some property of Franklin Mills adjoining the plant. This plan Mills brusquely turns down, as he does all of Shepherd's humanitarian schemes, thereby again deeply hurting the feelings of his son.

That evening Shepherd and Constance have dinner at Franklin Mills's house, prior to a dance. Alone with Shepherd, Mills privately requests him to have Constance exert some good influence over Leila, whose drinking he has noticed and whose "gallivanting" with one Thomas, divorced, he dislikes; meanwhile, upstairs, Leila is taking a surreptitious drink. While the young people are at the dance, Mills is to call on Millicent Harden, at whose home he is a frequent visitor.

MEREDITH NICHOLSON'S

Vital Novel of American Life

Illustrations by
Pruett Carter



Constance

Part Three: CHAPTER V

IN THE fortnight following his encounter with Mills at the Hardens', and the later meeting that same night in the storm, Bruce had thrown himself with fierce determination into his work. There must be no repetitions of such meetings; they added to his self-consciousness, made him ill at ease even when walking the streets in which at a turn of any corner he might run into Mills.

He had never known that he had a nerve in his body but now he was aware of disturbing sensations, inability to concentrate on his work, even a tremor of the hands as he bent over his drawing board. His abrupt change from the open road to an office in some measure accounted for this and he began going to a public golf links on Saturday afternoons and Sundays, and against the coming of winter he had his name proposed for membership in an athletic club.

He avoided going anywhere that might bring him again in contact with the man he believed to be his father. Shepherd Mills he met at the University Club now and then, and he was not a little ashamed of himself for repelling the young man's friendly overtures. Shepherd, evidently feeling that he must in some way explain his silence as to the clubhouse for the battery plant employees for which Bruce had made tentative sketches, spoke of the scheme one day as a matter he was obliged to defer for the present.

But Bruce too has called on Millicent that evening. He admires the extraordinary fine decorative quality of her music room with its stained glass window depicting a knight in armor, and she plays the organ for him. As she plays, Franklin Mills comes in. The three talk only a few moments when Mills excuses himself.

Going home, Bruce meets Mills in the rain and is invited into the latter's house. He cannot help accepting, though the constant meetings with the Mills family are deeply disturbing to him. As they talk before the fire of commonplace things, Mills keeps studying something above Bruce's head. This, Bruce finds, is a portrait of Mills's father, who looks extraordinarily like Bruce himself.

After Bruce leaves, it seems to Mills that his father's eyes—the eyes of young Storrs—are fixed upon him with a curious disconcerting gravity.



"Does this Storrs," asked Mills, "go out among people you know?" "Oh, I think so, dada!" said Leila.

"It's a little late in the season to begin; and father's doubtful about it—thinks it might cause feeling among the men in other concerns. I hadn't thought of that aspect of the matter——"

Shepherd paused and frowned as he waited for Bruce to offer some comment on the abandonment of the project. It was none of Bruce's affair but he surmised that the young man had been keenly disappointed by his father's refusal to sanction the building of the clubhouse.

"Oh well, it doesn't matter!" Bruce remarked as though it were merely a professional matter of no great importance. But he thought intently, as he left Shepherd, about the relations of the father and son. They were utterly irreconcilable natures. Having seen Franklin Mills, sat at his fireside, noted the man's enjoyment of ease and luxury, it was not difficult to understand his lack of sympathy with Shepherd's radical tendencies. Piecing together what he had heard about Mills from Henderson and

Millicent Harden with his own estimate, Bruce was confident that whatever else Franklin Mills might be he was no altruist.

It was in Bruce's heart to be kind and he was sorry after he left Shepherd that he had been so brusque. He might at least have expressed his sympathy with the young man's wish to do something to promote the happiness of his workmen. The vitality so evident in Franklin Mills's vigorous figure, and his perfect poise, made Shepherd appear almost ridiculous in contrast.

Bruce noted that the other young men about the club did not treat Shepherd quite as one of themselves. When Shepherd sat at the big round table in the grill he would listen to the free give and take with a pathetic eagerness to share in their good fellowship, but unable to make himself quite one of them. This might have been due, Bruce thought, to the anxiety of Shepherd's contemporaries—young fellows he had grown up with—to show



"I asked him to call and he hasn't. I guess the joke's on me."

their indifference to the fact that he was the son of the richest man in town. Or they felt, perhaps, that Shepherd was not equal to his opportunities. No one ever had occasion to refer to him as a profligate young prince whose evil ways were bound to land him in the poorhouse or the gutter.

Bruce was sorry for Shepherd and in other circumstances would have felt moved to make a friend of him. But the fact that they were of the same blood haunted him like a hideous oft-recurring nightmare.

II

BRUCE had reached a mood common to sensitive men in which he craved talk with a woman—a woman of understanding. It was Saturday and the office closed at noon. He would ask Millicent to share his freedom by driving into the country; and

without giving himself time to debate the matter, he made haste to call her on the telephone.

Her voice responded cheerily. Leila had just broken an engagement with her for golf and wouldn't he play? When he explained that he wasn't a member of a club and the best he could do would be to take her to a public course, she declared that he must be her guest. The point was too trivial for discussion; the sooner they got off the better, and so two o'clock found them both with a good initial drive starting over the Country Club course.

"Long drives mean long talks," she said. "We start at least with the respect of our caddies. You'll never guess what I was doing when you called up!"

"At the organ, or in the studio putting a nose on somebody?"

"Wrong! I was planting tulip bulbs. This was a day when I couldn't have played a note or touched clay to save my life. Ever have such fits?"

"I certainly do," replied Bruce.

Today he was finding her different from the girl who had played for him, and yet not the girl of his adventure on the river or the Millicent he had met at the Country Club party. There was a charm in her variableness, perhaps because of her unchanging sincerity and instinctive kindness. He waited for her to putt and rolled his own ball into the cup.

"Sometimes I see things black; and then there *does* appear to be blue sky," he said.

"Yes; but that's not a serious symptom. If we didn't have those little mental experiences we wouldn't be interesting to ourselves!"

"Great Scott! *Must* we be interesting to ourselves!"

"Absolutely!"

"But when I'm down in the mouth I don't care whether I'm interesting or not!"

"Nothing in it! Life's full of things to do—you know that! I believe you're just trying to psychoanalyze me!"

"I swear I'm not! I was as blue as indigo this morning; that's why I called you up!"

"Now—" she carefully measured a short approach and played it neatly. "Oh, you didn't want to see me socially, so to speak; you just wanted someone to tell your troubles to! Is that a back-handed compliment?"

"Rather a confession—do you hate it?"

"No—I rather like that . . ."

With an artist's eye she watched him drive a long low ball with his brassie. His tall figure, the free play of arms and shoulders, his boyish smile when she praised the shot contributed to a new impression of him. He appeared younger than the night he called on her when she had thought him diffident, old-fashioned and stiffly formal.

As they walked over the turf with a misty drizzle wetting their faces fitfully it seemed to both that their acquaintance had just begun. When he asked if she didn't want to quit she protested that she was dressed for any weather. It was unnecessary to accommodate himself to her in any way; she walked as rapidly as he; when she sliced her ball into the rough she bade him not follow her and when she had gotten into the course again she ran to join him, as though eager not to break the thread of their talk. The thing she was doing at a given moment was, he judged, the one thing in the world that interested her. The wind rose presently and blew the mist away and there was promise of a clearing sky.

The Hope of Happiness

"You've brought the sun back!" he exclaimed. "Something told me you had influence with the weather."

"I haven't invoked any of my gods today; so give the Weather Bureau the credit."

"Your gods! You speak as though you had a list."

"Good gracious! You promised me once not to pick me up and make me explain myself."

"Then I apologize. I can see that it isn't fair to make a goddess explain her own divinity."

"Oh-o-o-o," she mocked him. "You get zero for that!"

She was walking along with her hands thrust into the pockets of her sweater, the brim of her small sport hat turned up.

"But seriously," she went on, "out of doors is the best place to think of God. The churches make religion seem so complicated.

We can't believe in a God we can't imagine. Where there's sky and grass it's all so much simpler. The only God I can feel is a spirit hovering all about, watching and loving us—the God of the Blue Horizons. I can't think of Him as a being whose name must be whispered as children whisper of terrifying things in the dark."

"The God of the Blue Horizons?" He repeated the phrase slowly. "Yes; the world has had its day of fear—anything that lifts our eyes to the blue sky is good—really gives us, I suppose, a sense of the reality of God."

It was a novel experience to be walking over a golf course with a girl whose thoughts ranged the infinite and who disclosed her views with a perfect naturalness that was quite in keeping with the scene.

"I may be wrong but to me it's a very satisfactory idea. When I was a little girl and went to church I thought God must be terrible. But after a while, when I decided that God is greater than the creeds and churches teach, and that He isn't cruel, but infinitely kind, and wouldn't be pleased to have us approach Him on our knees as though He were a glowering potentate—then I began to be happy. The churches put God too far away. I like to think my Heaven is right here—just as fine and beautiful as I can make it. Does that seem reasonable?" she asked smilingly.

"It sounds pretty fine," he replied soberly.

They had encountered few players, but a foursome was now approaching them where the lines of the course paralleled.

"Constance Mills and George Whitford; I don't know the others," observed Millicent.

Mrs. Mills waved her hand and started toward them, looking very fit in a smart sport suit. Idly swinging her driver she had hardly the air of a zealous golfer.

"Ah!" she exclaimed. "Aren't we the brave ones? Scotch blood! Not afraid of a little moisture. Mr. Storrs! I know now why you've never been to see me—you're better occupied. It's dreadful to be an old married woman. You see what happens, Millicent! I warn you solemnly against marriage. Yes, George—I'm coming. Nice to meet you, even by chance, Mr. Storrs. By-by, Millicent."

"You've displeased her ladyship," Millicent remarked. "You ought to go to see her."

"I haven't felt strongly moved," Bruce replied.

"She doesn't like being ignored. Of course nobody does, but Mrs. Mills demands to be amused."

"Is she being amused now?" Bruce asked.

Millicent laughed aloud.

"I wish Leila could have heard that!"

"Doesn't Leila like Mrs. Mills?"

"Yes, of course she does, but Constance is called the most beautiful and the best dressed woman in town and the admiration she gets goes to her head a little bit. Leila has a sense of humor that sees right through Constance's poses."

"Doesn't Leila pose just a little herself?"

"You might say that she does. Just now she's affecting the fast young person pose; but I hope she's about through with it."

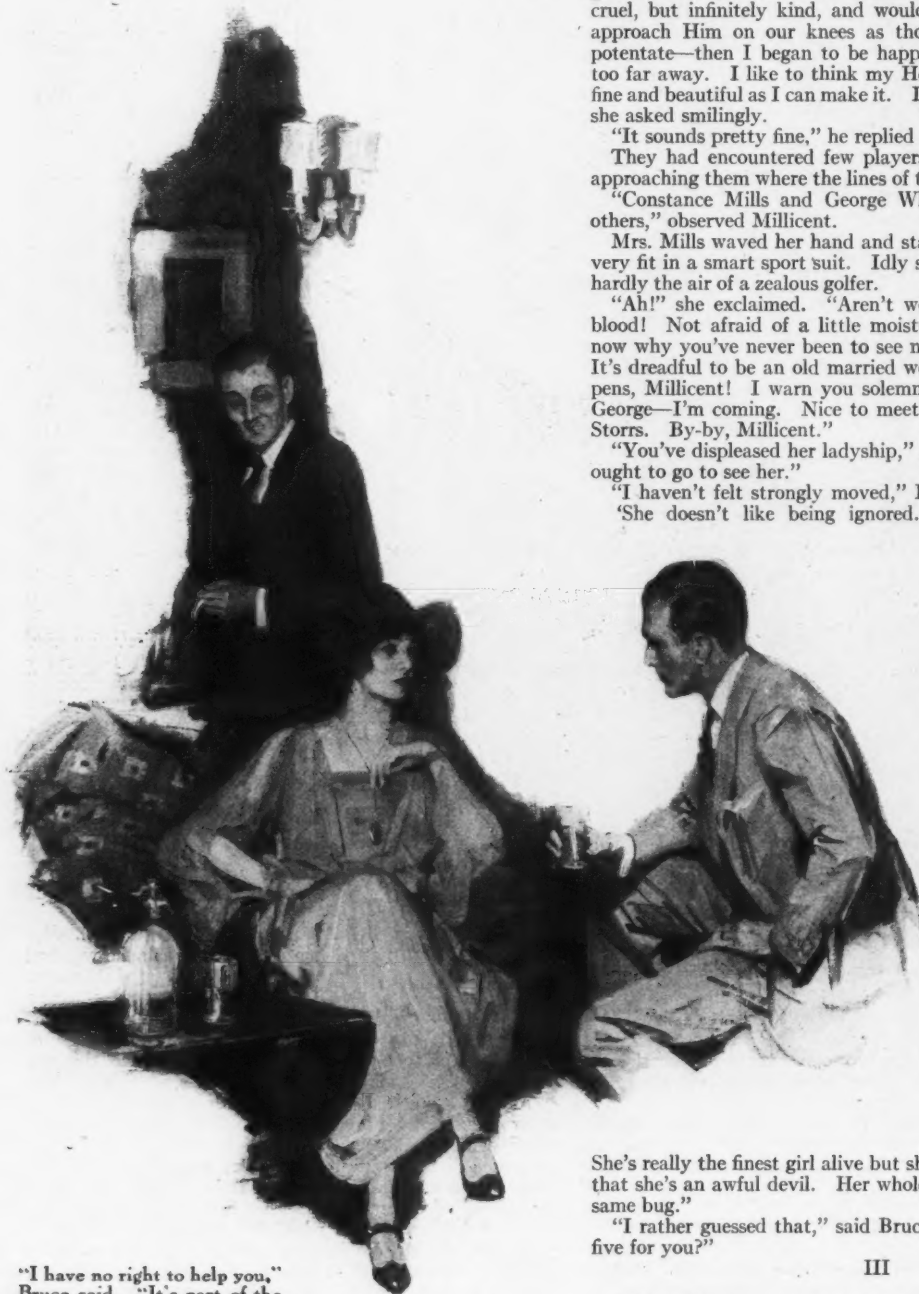
She's really the finest girl alive but she kids herself with the idea that she's an awful devil. Her whole crowd are affected by the same bug."

"I rather guessed that," said Bruce. "Let me see—was that five for you?"

III

WHEN they reached the clubhouse Millicent proposed that they go home for the tea which alone could fittingly conclude the

"I have no right to help you," Bruce said. "It's part of the game in this funny world that we've got to help ourselves."





"I want to come back sometime," Bruce told Millicent. "It's been a great afternoon for me."

afternoon. The moment they entered the Harden hall she lifted her arms dramatically.

"Jumbles!" she cried in a mockery of delight. "Mother has been making jumbles! Come straight to the kitchen!"

In the kitchen they found Mrs. Harden, her ample figure enveloped in a gingham apron of bright yellow checks that seemed to fill the bright, immaculate room with color. Bruce was a little dismayed by his sudden precipitation into the

culinary department of the establishment. Millicent was piling a plate with warm jumbles; a maid appeared and began getting the tea things ready. Mrs. Harden, her face aglow from its recent proximity to the gas range, explained to Bruce that it was the cook's afternoon out and at such times she always liked to cook something just to keep her hand in. She was proud of the kitchen with its white-tiled walls and flooring and glittering utensils. The library and the organ belonged to Millie, but

Doctor Harden had given her free swing to satisfy her own craving for an up-to-date kitchen.

Bruce's heart warmed under these revelations of the domestic sanctuary. Mrs. Harden's motherliness seemed to embrace the world and her humor and sturdy commonsense were strongly evident. She regaled Bruce with a story of a combat she had lately enjoyed with a plumber. If he would succeed as an architect he must be firm with plumbers!

Alone in the living room with their tea, Millicent and Bruce continued to find much to talk about. She was gay and serious by turns, made him talk of himself, and finding that this evidently was distasteful to him she found the way back to impersonal things again.

"Why go when there will be dinner pretty soon?" she asked when he rose.

"Because I want to come back sometime! I want some more jumbles! It's been a great afternoon for me. I do like the atmosphere of this house—kitchen and everything. And the outdoors was fine—and you—"

"I hoped you'd remember I was part of the scenery!"

"I couldn't forget it if I wanted to—and I don't! Do you suppose we could do it all over again—sometime when you're not terribly busy?"

"Oh, I'll try to bear another afternoon with you!"

"Or we might do a theater or a movie?"

"Even that is possible."

He didn't know that she was exerting herself to send him away cheerful. When he said soberly, his hand on the door, "You don't know how much you've helped me," she held up her finger warningly.

"Not so serious! Always cheerful—that's the word!"

"All right! You may have to say that pretty often."

Her light laugh, charged with friendliness, followed him down the steps. She had made him forget himself, lifted him several times to heights he had never known before.

But as he walked away a dark question crossed his mind: *What would Millicent say if she knew?*

IV

ON A GRAY November day Bud Henderson sought Bruce at Freeman's office. Bruce looked up from his desk with a frown that cleared as he recognized his friend.

With a cap pushed back on his head and buttoned up in a long ulster, Henderson eyed him stolidly and demanded to know what he was doing.

"Going over some specifications; you might say I'm at work, if you know what the word means."

"Thanks for the compliment, but it's time to quit," Henderson replied, taking a cigarette from a package on Bruce's desk. "I happen to know your boss is playing hand ball this moment at the Athletic and he'll never know you've skipped. I haven't liked a certain look in your eye lately. You're sticking too close to your job. Bill is pleased to death with your work, so you haven't a thing to worry about. Get your bonnet and we'll go out and see what we can stir up."

"I'm in a frame of mind to be tempted. But I ought to finish this stuff."

"Don't be silly," replied Bud, who was prowling about the room viewing the framed plans and drawings on the walls, peering into cabinets, unrolling blue prints merely to fling them aside with a groan of disgust.

"My God! It doesn't seem possible that Bill Freeman would put his name to such things!"

"Don't forget this is a *private* office, Mr. Henderson. What's agitating your bean?"

"Thought I'd run you up to the art institute to look at some Finnish work they're showing. Perhaps it's Hottentotish; or maybe it's Eskimo art. We've got to keep in touch with the world art movement." Henderson yawned.

"Try again; I pant for real excitement," said Bruce, who was wondering whether his friend really had noticed signs of his recent worry. Henderson, apparently intent upon a volume of prints of English country houses, swung round as Bruce, in putting on his overcoat, knocked over a chair. He crossed the room and laid his hands on Bruce's shoulders.

"I say, old top; this will never do! You're nervous; you're darned nervous. Knocking over chairs—and you with the finest body known in modern times! I watched you the other day eating your lunch all alone at the club—you didn't know I was looking at you. Your expression couldn't be accounted for even by that bum club lunch. Now if it's money—"

"Nothing of the kind, Bud!" Bruce protested. "You'll have me scared in a minute. There's nothing the matter with me. I'm all right; I just have to get readjusted to a new way of living; that's all."

"Well, as you don't thrill to the idea of viewing our local works of art, I'll tell you what I'm really here for. I'm luring you away to sip tea with a widow!"

"A widow! Where do you get the idea that I'm a consoler of widows?"

"This one doesn't need consoling! Helen Torrence is the name; relict of the late James B. deceased. She's been away ever since you lit in our midst and just got home. About our age and not painful to look at. Jim Torrence was a good fifty when he met her, at White Sulphur or some such seat of opulence, and proudly brought her home for local inspection. The gossips forcibly removed most of her moral character, just on suspicion, you understand—but James B.'s money had a soothing effect and she got one foot inside our social door before he passed hence three years ago and left her the boodle he got from his first wife. Helen's a good scout. It struck me all of a heap about an hour ago that she's just the girl to cheer you up. I was just kidding about the art stuff. I telephoned Helen I was coming so we're all set."

"Ah! I see through the whole game! You're flirting with this woman and want me for a blind in case Maybelle finds you out."

"Clever! The boy's clever! But I never try to put anything over on Maybelle. A grand jury hasn't an all-seeing eye than Mrs. Bud Henderson. Let's beat it!"

On the drive uptown Henderson devoted himself with his usual thoroughness to a recital of the history of Mrs. Torrence. He warned Bruce not to be disturbed by any gossip he might hear about her; the town seethed with gossip, no one was immune. If Mrs. Torrence had been a little too flirtatious for a married woman, her indulgence in this pastime had never troubled her husband. Jim Torrence had been a good sport and a wise guy who wasn't fool enough to think that he could marry a girl half his age and expect her to spend her days sewing for the missionary society. Torrence had been crazy about her and Bud expressed the opinion that the scandalous reports which someone had imported from the Pennsylvania town that had been her home had so enraged her husband as to heighten his blood pressure and shorten his life.

The lady's present social status lay somewhere between the old and the new element, Bud explained. The president of the trust company that administered her affairs belonged to the old crowd—the paralytic or angina pectoris group, as Bud described it, and his wife and daughters just *had* to be nice to Torrence's widow or run a chance of offending her and losing control of the estate. On the other hand her natural gaiety threw her toward the camps of the newer element who were too busy having a good time to indulge in ancestor worship.

Henderson concluded his illuminative exposition of Mrs. Torrence's life history as they reached the house. They were admitted by a colored butler who took their coats and flung open a door that revealed a spacious living room.

"Helen!" exclaimed Henderson dramatically.

It was possible that Mrs. Torrence had prepared for their entrance by posing in the middle of the room with a view to a first effect, an effect to which her quick little step as she came forward to meet them contributed. Her blue tea gown, parted a little above the ankles, invited inspection of her remarkably small feet adorned with brilliant buckles. She was short with a figure rounded to plumpness and with fluffy brown hair, caught up high as though to create an illusion as to her stature. Her complexion was a clear brilliant pink; her alert small eyes were a greenish blue. Her odd little staccato walk was in keeping with her general air of vivacity. She was all alive, amusingly abrupt, spontaneous, decisive.

"Bud, the old reliable! Mr. Storrs! Yes; I *had* been hoping for this!"

She gave a hand to each and looked up at Bruce, who towered above her, and nodded her approval of him. "This is delightful! A new man. And a marvelous specimen!"

As she explained that she had been away since June and was only just home Bruce became aware that Henderson had passed on and was standing by a tea table indulging in his usual style of railly with a young woman whose voice even before he looked at her identified her as Constance Mills.

"You know Mrs. Mills? Of course! If you'd only arrived this morning you'd know Connie. Not to know Connie is indeed to be unknown."

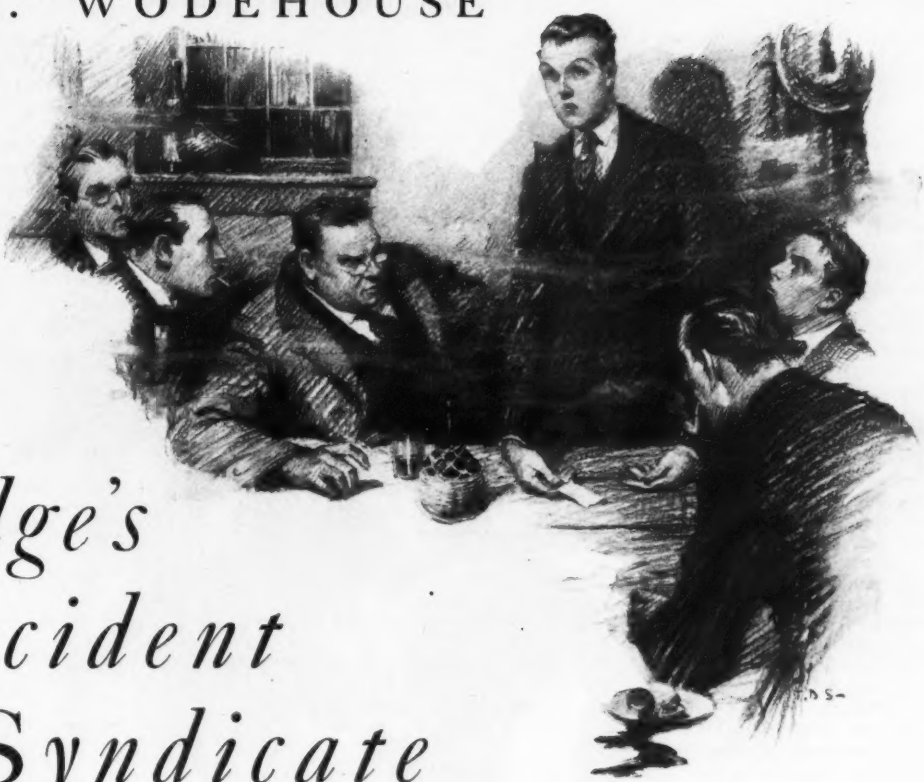
Constance extended her hand from (Continued on page 138)

By P. G. WODEHOUSE

*Who Laughs
in London
and is
Heard in
Gopher
Prairie*

Ukridge's Accident Syndicate

Illustrations by T. D. Skidmore



"HALF a minute, laddie," said Ukridge. And, gripping my arm, he brought me to a halt on the outskirts of the little crowd which had collected about the church door.

It was a crowd such as may be seen any morning during the London mating season outside any of the churches in the quiet squares between Hyde Park and the King's Road, Chelsea.

It consisted of five women of cook-like aspect, four nursemaids, half a dozen men of the non-producing class who had torn themselves away for the moment from their normal task of propping up the wall of the Bunch of Grapes public house on the corner, a costermonger with a barrow of vegetables, divers small boys, eleven dogs and two or three purposeful looking young fellows with cameras slung over their shoulders. It was plain that a wedding was in progress—and, arguing from the presence of the camera-men and the line of smart motorcars along the curb, a fairly fashionable wedding. What was not plain—to me—was why Ukridge, sternest of bachelors, had desired to add himself to the spectators.

"What," I inquired, "is the thought behind this? Why are we interrupting our walk to attend the obsequies of some perfect stranger?"

Ukridge did not reply for a moment. He seemed plunged in thought. Then he uttered a hollow, mirthless laugh—a dreadful sound like the last gargle of a dying moose.

"Perfect stranger my number eleven foot!" he responded in his coarse way. "Do you know who's getting hitched up in there?"

"Who?"

Inside the church the organ had swelled into the familiar music of the Wedding March. A verger came out and opened the doors. The five cooks ceased their reminiscences of other and smarter weddings at which they had participated. The camera-men unshipped their cameras. Out of the church came a beauteous being, leading attached to his arm a vision in white.

"Good Lord!" I cried. "Teddy Weeks!" And five years rolled away.

It was at Barolini's Italian restaurant in Beak Street that Ukridge evolved his great scheme. Barolini's was a favorite resort of our little group of earnest strugglers in the days when the philanthropic restaurateurs of Soho used to supply four courses and coffee for a shilling and sixpence; and there were

present that night, besides Ukridge and myself, the following men about town: Teddy Weeks, the actor, fresh from a six weeks' tour with the number three Only a Shop Girl company; Victor Beamish, the artist, the man who drew that picture of the O-So-Eesi Piano Player in the advertisement pages of the Piccadilly Magazine; Bertram Fox, author of *Ashes of Remorse* and other unproduced motion picture scenarios; and Robert Dunhill, who, being employed at a salary of eighty pounds per annum by the New Asiatic Bank, represented the sober, hard headed commercial element. As usual, Teddy Weeks had collared the conversation and was telling us once again how good he was and how hardly treated by a malignant fate.

Modern novelists are fond of writing about the merciless intolerance of youth and youth's clear eyed judgment and all the rest of it; but personally I have always thought that it is the young who are most easily satisfied, particularly when it comes to a choice of companions. Every time I look at the photographs of my school days, I marvel that any community can ever have been broadminded enough to endure the thing I then was.

Apart from that horrible smirk and that brilliantined hair, setting aside the sleek fatness of the cheeks and those dull, repellent eyes, so like a couple of unintelligent poached eggs, how, I wonder now, could my little playmates have stood the sort of collars which I used to wear at that epoch? And yet I had my friends. It was the glorious tolerance of youth that enabled them to bear up and stick it like men; and it was, I suppose, this same tolerance which made us admit Teddy Weeks to fellowship. Ukridge, I own, insisted from the first that the man was a blister and would frequently censure the remissness and lack of public spirit shown by his parents in not having drowned him in a bucket as a child; but to the rest of us he seemed a good enough fellow on the whole.

There is no need to describe Teddy Weeks. Under another and a more euphonious name he has long since made his personal appearance dreadfully familiar to all who read the illustrated weekly papers. He was then, as now, a sickeningly handsome young man, possessing precisely the same melting eyes, mobile mouth and corrugated hair so esteemed by the theater-going public today. And yet at this period of his career he was wasting himself on minor touring companies of the kind which open at Barrow-in-Furness and jump to Bootle for the second half of the

week. He attributed this, as Ukridge was so apt to attribute his own difficulties, to lack of capital.

"I have everything," he said querulously, emphasizing his remarks with a coffee spoon. "Looks, talent, personality, a beautiful speaking voice—everything. All I need is a chance. And I can't get that because I have no clothes fit to wear. These managers are all the same—they never look below the surface, they never bother to find out if a man has genius. All they go by is his clothes. If I could afford to buy a couple of suits from a Cork Street tailor, if I could have my boots made to order by Moykopf instead of getting them ready-made and secondhand at Moss Brothers', if I could once contrive to own a decent hat, a really good pair of spats and a gold cigarette case all at the same time, I could walk into any manager's office in London and sign up for a West End production tomorrow."

It was at this point that Freddie Lunt came in. Freddie, like Robert Dunhill, was a financial magnate in the making and an assiduous frequenter of Barolini's; and it suddenly occurred to us that a considerable time had passed since we had last seen him in the place. We inquired the reason for this aloofness.

"I've been in bed," said Freddie, "for over a fortnight."

The statement incurred Ukridge's stern disapproval. That great man made a practice of never rising before noon, and on one occasion, when a carelessly thrown match had burned a hole in his only pair of trousers, had gone so far as to remain between the sheets for forty-eight hours; but sloth on so majestic a scale as this shocked him.

"Lazy young devil," he commented severely. "Letting the golden hours of youth slip by like that when you ought to have been bustling about and making a name for yourself."

Freddie protested himself wronged by the imputation.

"I had an accident," he explained. "Fell off my bicycle and sprained an ankle."

"Tough luck," was our verdict.

"Oh, I don't know!" said Freddie. "It wasn't bad in getting a rest. And of course there was the fiver."

"What fiver?"

"I got a fiver from the Weekly Cyclist for getting my ankle sprained."

"You—*what?*" cried Ukridge, profoundly stirred—as ever—by a tale of easy money. "Do you mean to sit there and tell me that some dashed paper paid you five quid simply because you sprained your ankle? Pull yourself together, old horse. Things like that don't happen."

"It's quite true."

"Can you show me the fiver?"

"No, because if I did you would try to borrow it."

Ukridge ignored this slur in dignified silence.

"Would they pay a fiver to *anyone* who sprained his ankle?" he asked, sticking to the main point.

"Yes. If he was a subscriber."

"I knew there was a catch in it," said Ukridge moodily.



"I told Weeks to jump in," said Ukridge. "He said no, it was just a private dispute. Dashed finicky! I tell you, laddie, this blighter has cold feet."

"Lots of weekly papers are starting this wheeze," proceeded Freddie. "You pay a year's subscription and that entitles you to accident insurance."

We were interested. This was in the days before every daily paper in London was competing madly against its rivals in the matter of insurance and offering princely bribes to the citizens to make a fortune by breaking their necks. Nowadays papers are paying as high as two thousand pounds for a genuine corpse and five pounds a week for a mere dislocated spine; but at that time the idea was new and it had an attractive appeal.

"How many of these rags are doing this?" asked Ukridge. You could tell from the gleam in his eyes that that great brain was whirling like a dynamo. "As many as ten?"

"Yes, I should think so. Quite ten."

"Then a fellow who subscribed to them all and then sprained his ankle would get fifty quid?" said Ukridge, reasoning acutely.

"More, if the injury was more serious," said Freddie, the expert. "They have a regular tariff. So much for a broken arm, so much for a broken leg and so forth."

Ukridge's collar leaped off its stud and his pince-nez wobbled drunkenly as he turned to us.

"How much money can you blokes raise?" he demanded.

"What do you want it for?" asked Robert Dunhill, with a banker's caution.

"My dear old horse, can't you see? Why, my gosh, I've got the idea of the century. Upon my Sam, this is the giltest-edged scheme that was ever hatched. We'll get together enough money and take out a year's subscription for every one of these dashed papers."

"What's the good of that?" said Dunhill, coldly unenthusiastic. They train bank clerks to stifle emotion so that they will be able to refuse over-drafts when they become managers. "The odds are we should none of us have an accident of any kind and then the money would be chucked away."

"Good heavens, ass," snorted Ukridge, "you don't suppose I'm suggesting that we should leave it to chance, do you? Listen, here's the scheme. We take out subscriptions for all these papers, then we draw lots, and the fellow who gets the fatal card or whatever it is goes out and breaks his leg and draws the loot and we split it up between us and live on it in luxury. It ought to run into hundreds of pounds."

A long silence followed. Then Dunhill spoke again. His was a solid rather than a nimble mind.

"Suppose he couldn't break his leg?"

"My gosh!" cried Ukridge, exasperated. "Here we are in the twentieth century, with every resource of modern civilization at our disposal, with opportunities for getting our legs broken opening about us on every side—and you ask a silly question like that! Of course he could break his leg. Any ass can break a leg. It's a little hard! We're all infernally broke—personally,

unless Freddie can lend me a bit of that fiver till Saturday, I'm going to have a difficult job pulling through . . . We all need money like the dickens, and yet, when I point out this marvelous scheme for collecting a bit, instead of fawning on me for my ready intelligence you sit and make objections. It isn't the right spirit. It isn't the spirit that wins."

"If you're as hard up as that," objected Dunhill, "how are you going to put in your share of the pool?"

A pained, almost a stunned look came into Ukridge's eyes. He gazed at Dunhill through his lopsided pince-nez as one who speculates as to whether his hearing has deceived him.

"Me?" he cried. "Me? I like that! Upon my Sam, that's rich! Why, damme, if there's any justice in the world, if there's a spark of decency and good feeling in your bally bosoms, I should think you would let me in free for suggesting the idea. It's a little hard! I supply the brains and you want me to cough up cash as well. My gosh, I didn't expect this. This hurts me, by George! If anybody had told me that an old pal would . . ."

"Oh, all right," said Robert Dunhill. "All right, all right, all right. But I'll tell you one thing. If you draw the lot it'll be the happiest day of my life."

"I shan't," said Ukridge. "Something tells me that I shan't."

Nor did he. When, in a solemn silence broken only by the sound of a distant waiter quarreling with the cook down a speaking tube, we had completed the drawing, the man of destiny was Teddy Weeks.

I suppose that even in the springtime of youth, when broken limbs seem a lighter matter than they become later in life, it can never be an unmixedly agreeable thing to have to go out into the public highways and try to make an accident happen to one. In such circumstances the reflection that you are thereby benefiting your friends brings but slight balm. To Teddy Weeks it appeared to bring no balm at all. That he was experiencing a certain disinclination to sacrifice himself for the public good became more and more evident as the days went by and found him still intact.

Ukridge, when he called upon me to discuss the matter, was visibly perturbed. He sank into a chair beside the table at which I was beginning my modest morning meal and, having drunk half my coffee, sighed deeply.

"Upon my Sam," he moaned, "it's a little disheartening. I strain my brain to think up schemes for getting us all a bit of money just at the moment when we are all needing it most, and when I hit on what is probably the simplest and yet ripest notion of our time this blighter Weeks goes and lets me down by shirking his plain duty. It's just my luck that a fellow like that should have drawn the lot. And the worst of it is, laddie, that now we've started with him, we've got to keep on. We can't possibly raise enough money to pay yearly subscriptions for anybody else. It's Weeks or nobody."

"I suppose we must give him time."

"That's what he says," grunted Ukridge morosely, helping himself to toast. "He says he doesn't know how to start about it. To listen to him, you'd think that going and having a trifling accident was the sort of delicate and intricate job that required years of study and special preparation. Why, a child of six could do it on his head at five minutes' notice. The man's so infernally particular. You make helpful suggestions, and instead of accepting them in a broad reasonable spirit of cooperation he comes back at you every time with some frivolous objection. He's so dashed fastidious."

"When we were out last night we came on a couple of navvies scrapping. Good hefty fellows, either of them capable of putting him in hospital for a month. I told him to jump in and start separating them, and he said no, it was a private dispute which was none of his business and he didn't feel justified in interfering. Finicky, I call it. I tell you, laddie, this blighter is a broken reed. He has got cold feet. We did wrong to let him into the drawing at all. We might have known that a fellow like that would never give results. No conscience. No sense of *esprit de corps*. No

notion of putting himself out to the most trifling extent for the benefit of the community. Haven't you any more marmalade, laddie?"

"I have not."

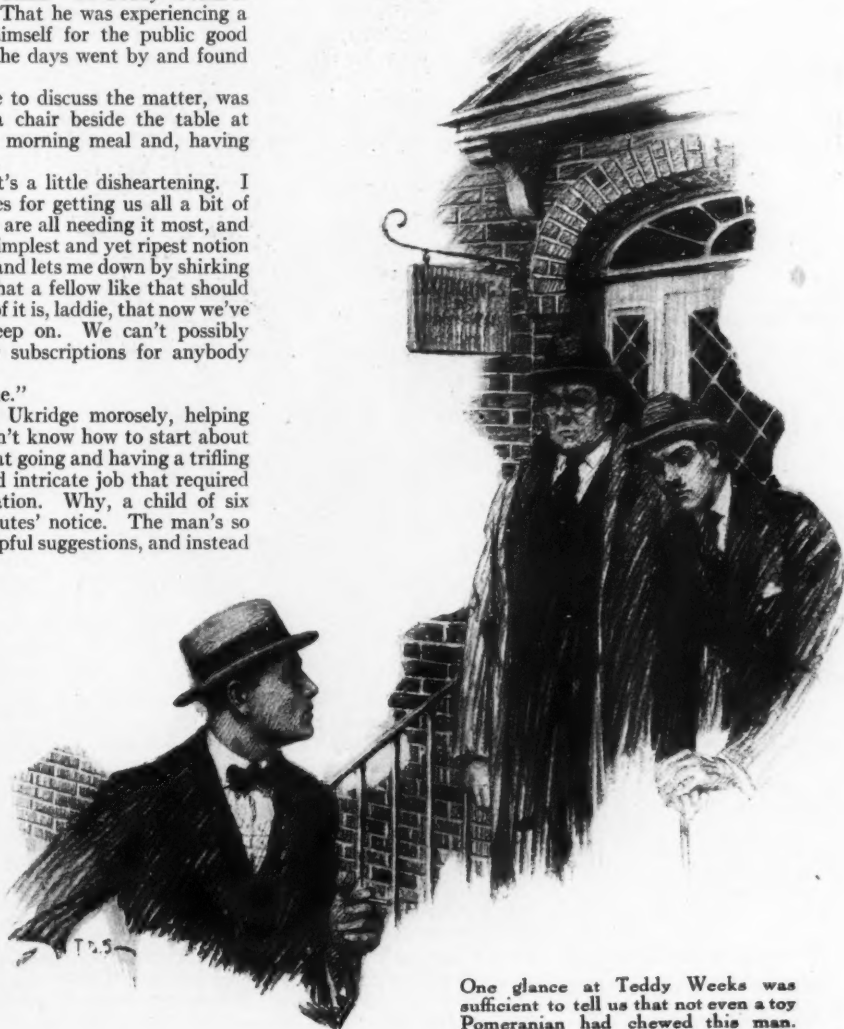
"Then I'll be going," said Ukridge moodily. "I suppose," he added, pausing at the door, "you couldn't lend me five bob?"

"How did you guess?"

"Then I'll tell you what," said Ukridge, ever fair and reasonable, "you can stand me dinner tonight." He seemed cheered up for the moment by this happy compromise, but gloom descended on him again. His face clouded. "When I think," he said, "of all the money that's locked up in that poor faint hearted fish, just waiting to be released, I could sob. Sob, laddie, like a little child. I never liked that man—he has a bad eye and waves his hair. Never trust a man who waves his hair, old horse."

Ukridge's pessimism was not confined to himself. By the end of a fortnight, nothing having happened to Teddy Weeks worse than a slight cold which he shook off in a couple of days, the general consensus of opinion among his apprehensive colleagues in the Syndicate was that the situation had become desperate. There were no signs whatever of any return on the vast capital which we had laid out, and meanwhile meals had to be bought, landladies paid and a reasonable supply of tobacco acquired. It was a melancholy task in these circumstances to read one's paper of a morning.

All over the inhabited globe, so the well informed sheet gave one to understand, every kind of accident was happening every day to practically everybody in existence except Teddy Weeks. Farmers in Minnesota were getting mixed up with reaping machines; peasants in India were being bisected by crocodiles; iron



One glance at Teddy Weeks was sufficient to tell us that not even a toy Pomeranian had chewed this man.

Ukridge's Accident Syndicate

girders from skyscrapers were falling hourly on the heads of citizens in every town from Philadelphia to San Francisco; and the only people who were not down with ptomaine poisoning were those who had walked over cliffs, driven automobiles into walls, tripped over manholes or assumed on too slight evidence that the gun was not loaded.

In a crippled world, it seemed, Teddy Weeks walked alone, whole and glowing with health. It was one of those grim, ironical, hopeless, gray, despairful situations which the Russian novelists love to write about, and I could not find it in me to blame Ukridge for taking direct action in this crisis. My only regret was that bad luck caused so excellent a plan to miscarry.

My first intimation that he had been trying to hurry matters on came when he and I were walking along the King's Road one evening and he drew me into Markham Square, a dismal backwater where he had once had rooms.

"What's the idea?" I asked, for I disliked the place.

"Teddy Weeks lives here," said Ukridge. "In my old rooms." I could not see that this lent any fascination to the place. Every day and in every way I was feeling sorrier and sorrier that I had been foolish enough to put money which I could ill spare into a venture which had all the earmarks of a washout, and my sentiments towards Teddy Weeks were cold and hostile. "I want to inquire after him."

"Inquire after him? Why?"

"Well, the fact is, laddie, I have an idea that he has been bitten by a dog."

"What makes you think that?"

"Oh, I don't know!" said Ukridge dreamily. "I've just got the idea. You know how one gets ideas."

The mere contemplation of this beautiful event was so inspiring that for a while it held me silent. In each of the ten journals in which we had invested, dog bites were specifically recommended as things which every subscriber ought to have. They came about halfway up the list of lucrative accidents, inferior to a broken rib or a fractured fibula, but better value than an ingrowing toenail.

I was gloating happily over the picture conjured up by Ukridge's words when an exclamation brought me back with a start to the realities of life. A revolting sight met my eyes. Down

the street came ambling the familiar figure of Teddy Weeks, and one glance at his elegant person was enough to tell us that our hopes had been built on sand. Not even a toy Pomeranian had chewed this man.

"Hullo, you fellows," said Teddy Weeks.

"Hullo," we responded dully.

"Can't stop," said Teddy Weeks. "I've got to fetch a doctor."

"A doctor?"

"Yes. Poor Victor Beamish. He's been bitten by a dog."

Ukridge and I exchanged weary glances. It seemed as if fate was going out of its way to have sport with us. What was the good of a dog biting Victor Beamish? What was the good of a hundred dogs biting Victor Beamish? A dog-bitten Victor Beamish had no market value whatever.

"You know that fierce brute that belongs to my landlady," said Teddy Weeks. "The one that always dashes out into the area and barks at people who come to the front door." I remembered. A large mongrel with wild eyes and flashing fangs, badly in need of a haircut. I had encountered it once in the street when visiting Ukridge, and only the presence of the latter, who knew it well and to whom all dogs were as brothers, had saved me from the doom of Victor Beamish. "Somehow or other he got into my bedroom this evening. He was waiting there when I came home. I had brought Beamish back with me, and the animal pinned him by the leg the moment I opened the door."

"Why didn't he pin you?" asked Ukridge, aggrieved.

"What I can't make out," said Teddy Weeks, "is how on earth the brute came to be in my room. Somebody must have put him there. The whole thing is very mysterious."

"Why didn't he pin you?" demanded Ukridge again.

"Oh, I managed to climb on to the top of the wardrobe while he was biting Beamish!" said Teddy Weeks. "And then the landlady came and took him away. But I can't stop here talking. I must go and get that doctor."

We gazed after him in silence as he tripped down the street. We noted the careful manner in which he paused at the corner to eye the traffic before crossing the road, the wary way in which he drew back to allow a truck to rattle past.

"You heard that?" said Ukridge tensely. "He climbed on to the top of the wardrobe!"

"Yes."

"And you saw the way he dodged that excellent truck?"

"Yes."

"Something's got to be done," said Ukridge firmly. "The man has got to be awakened to a sense of his responsibilities."

Next day a deputation waited on Teddy Weeks.

Ukridge was our spokesman, and he came to the point with admirable directness.

"How about it?" asked Ukridge.

"How about what?" replied Teddy Weeks, nervously avoiding his accusing eye.

"When do we get action?"

"Oh, you mean that accident business?"

"Yes."

"I've been thinking about that," said Teddy Weeks.

Ukridge drew the mackintosh which he wore indoors and out of doors and in all weathers more closely around him. There was in the action something suggestive of a member of the Roman Senate about to denounce an enemy of the state. In just such a manner must Cicero have swished his toga as he took a deep breath preparatory to assailing Clodius. He toyed for a moment with the ginger beer wire which held his pince-nez in place and endeavored without success to button his collar at the back. In moments of emotion Ukridge's collar always took on a sort of temperamental jumpiness which no stud could restrain.

"And about time you were thinking about it," he boomed sternly. We shifted appreciatively in our seats—all except Victor Beamish, who had declined a chair and was standing by the mantelpiece.



"Think of the suits, the boots, the hats, the spats," pleaded Ukridge. "Here's your chance."

"Upon my Sam, it's about time you were thinking about it. Do you realize that we've invested an enormous sum of money in you on the distinct understanding that we could rely on you to do your duty and get immediate results? Are we to be forced to the conclusion that you are so yellow and few in the pod as to want to evade your honorable obligations? We thought better of you, Weeks. Upon my Sam, we thought better of you. We took you for a two fisted, enterprising, big souled, one hundred percent he-man who would stand by his friends to the finish."

"Yes, but——"

"Any bloke with a sense of loyalty and an appreciation of what it meant to the rest of us would have rushed out and found some means of fulfilling his duty long ago. You don't even grasp at the opportunities that come your way. Only yesterday I saw you draw back when a single step into the road would have had a truck bumping into you."

"Well, it's not so easy to let a truck bump into you."

"Nonsense. It only requires a little ordinary resolution. Use your imagination, man. Try to think that a child has fallen down in the street. A little golden-haired child," said Ukridge, deeply affected. "And a dashed great cab or something comes rolling up. The kid's mother is standing on the pavement, helpless, her hands clasped in agony. Dammit, she cries, will no one save my darling? Yes, by George, you shout, I will. And out you jump and the thing's over in half a second. I don't know what you're making such a fuss about."

"Yes, but——" said Teddy Weeks.

"I'm told, what's more, it isn't a bit painful. A sort of dull shock, that's all."

"Who told you that?"

"I forget. Someone."

"Well, you can tell him from me that he's an ass," said Teddy Weeks with asperity.

"All right. If you object to being run over by a truck there are lots of other ways. But, upon my Sam, it's pretty hopeless suggesting them. You seem to have no enterprise at all. Yesterday, after I went to all the trouble to put a dog in your room, which would have done the work for you—all that I had to do was stand still and let him use his own judgment—what happened? You climbed on to——"

Victor Beamish interrupted, speaking in a voice husky with emotion.

"Was it you who put that dog in the room?"

"Eh?" said Ukridge. "Why, yes. But we can have a good talk about all that later on," he proceeded hastily. "The point at the moment is how the dickens we're going to persuade this poor worm to collect our insurance money for us. Why, damme, I should have thought you would have——"

"All I can say——" began Victor Beamish heatedly.

"Yes, yes," said Ukridge, "some other time. Must stick to business now, laddie . . . I was saying," he resumed, "that I should have thought you would have been as keen as mustard to put the job through for your own sake. You're always beefing that you haven't any clothes to impress managers with. Think

of all you can buy with your share of the swag once you have summoned up a little ordinary determination and seen the thing through. Think of the suits, the boots, the hats, the spats . . . You're always talking about your dashed career and how all you need to land you in a West End production is good clothes. Well, here's your chance to get them."

His eloquence was not wasted. A wistful look came into

Teddy Weeks's eye, such a look as must have come into the eye of Moses on the summit of Pisgah. He breathed heavily. You could see that the man was mentally walking along Cork Street, weighing the merits of one famous tailor against another.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," he said suddenly. "It's no use asking me to put this thing through in cold blood. I simply can't do it. I haven't the nerve. But if you fellows will give me a dinner tonight with lots of champagne I think it will key me up to it."

A heavy silence fell upon the room. Champagne! The word was like a knell.

"How on earth are we going to afford champagne?" said Victor Beamish.

"Well, there it is," said Teddy Weeks. "Take it or leave it."

"Gentlemen," said Ukridge, "it would seem that the company requires more capital. How about it, old horses? Let's get together in a frank, businesslike, cards on the table spirit and see what can be done. I can raise ten bob."

"What!" cried the entire assembled company, amazed. "How?"

"I'll pawn a banjo."

"You haven't got a banjo."

"No, but George Tupper has, and I know where he keeps it."

Started in this spirited way, the subscriptions came pouring in. I contributed a cigarette case, Bertram Fox thought his landlady would let him owe for another week, Robert Dunhill had an uncle in Kensington who, he fancied, if tactfully approached, would be good for a quid, and Victor Beamish said that if the advertisement manager of the O-So-Eesi Piano Player was churlish enough to refuse an advance of five shillings against future work he misjudged him sadly. Within a few minutes, in short, the lightning drive had produced

the impressive total of two pounds six shillings, and we asked Teddy Weeks if he thought that he could get adequately keyed up within the limits of that sum.

"I'll try," said Teddy Weeks.

So, not unmindful of the fact that that excellent hostelry supplied champagne at eight shillings the quart bottle, we fixed the meeting for seven o'clock at Barolini's.

Considered as a social affair Teddy Weeks's keying up dinner was not a success. Almost from the start I think we all found it trying. It was not so much the fact that he was drinking deeply of Barolini's eight shilling champagne while we, from lack of funds, were compelled to confine ourselves to meager beverages; what really marred the pleasantness of the function was the extraordinary effect the stuff had on Teddy. What was actually in the champagne supplied to Barolini and purveyed by him to the public, such as were (Continued on page 102)



"It was just my fun," repeated Weeks. "You don't mind my fun, do you? All my fun."

Stories That Have Made Me

Illustrations by

MACK SENNETT was speaking the other day about the new Wright Act recently passed by the Legislature of the State of California. He said it resembled the liquor it aimed to destroy, in that while nobody seemed to know what it contained, everybody thought it would be extremely potent.

For instance, Mr. Sennett said, a resident of Los Angeles rang up a New Yorker at his hotel and invited him to attend a party then in progress at the Angeleno's house. It had in fact been progressing for several hours and had reached the point where none of the guests knew or cared whether the party was being conducted under the Wright Act of California or the Mullen-Gage Law of New York.

"Take a taxi and come right over," the Angeleno insisted.

"I'm sorry, old man," the New Yorker replied, "but I'm up in my room with a case of neuritis."

"Well, bring it along with you," the Angeleno said. "This crowd'll drink anything."



THE difference between an artist and an art critic is that the artist knows how to do it but not how it ought to be done, while the critic knows how it ought to be done but not how to do it. At any rate, this is what I gather from listening to conversations in the Salmagundi Club, which is com-

posed of artist and lay members.

A great many of the lay members are artists at least in desire; they can talk a picture but they can't paint one, and of such is the kingdom of art criticism. None of them is the type of picture lover who doesn't know anything about art but knows what he likes. They all know what they like and don't like anything.

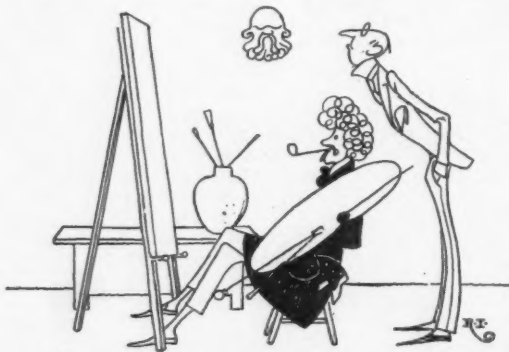
One of them always criticizes a picture upon the ground that the painter has put too much upon his canvas. His favorite condemnation is that the painter doesn't know what to leave out, and the other day one of the artist members came back at him with the following story:

A celebrated painter lost his mind, no doubt from trying to follow the suggestions of his critical friends. He was confined in an institution and was given canvas, paints and brushes to keep him quiet. When he received visitors they always found him in contemplation of a bare canvas.

"This," he would announce, "is my latest masterpiece."

"What does it represent?" the friend would inquire.

"Why, that's obvious," the artist would say, regarding the



vacant canvas admiringly. "It represents the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea."

"But where is the sea?"

"It has been driven back."

"And where are the Israelites?"

"They have crossed over."

"But how about the Egyptians?"

"The Egyptians will be here directly," he would conclude, covering the bare canvas. "They haven't arrived yet."

NOT so long ago I attended some exhibition bouts of scientific boxing at a so-called athletic club near Los Angeles, in which three of the contestants were knocked out, two holes were burned in my overcoat by the gentleman who was smoking cigarettes in the seat behind me and my neighbor on the right had his hat stolen. With this bond of sympathy between us, we ate supper together at a local lunch room and he entertained me with stories of prize fighting.

He said that when Corbett was a novice, his father made him promise to telegraph home the result of every fight in which he engaged. One night in Kansas City Corbett took on a young boilermaker of much pugilistic talent. The fight began at dusk. A few minutes after midnight Corbett sent to his father the following telegram:

WON EASILY SEVENTY-FIVE ROUNDS

YOU know, of course, about the fire-eating Southerner who was referred to by the local paper as a battle-scarred veteran, and after he had threatened to kill the editor the item was corrected the next morning by a paragraph which apologized for the misprint of the day before and then followed it up with another misprint in which the same gentleman was described as a battle-scarred veteran. This by way of prelude to the information that a short time ago the literary section of a Mid-western women's club discussed William Butler Yeats and the Gaelic revival. The local paper reported it as follows:

The Guest Day meeting of the literary section was held at the home of Mrs. L. A. Frazer yesterday. Mrs. De Morgan Jones of Indianapolis lectured on "William Butler Yeats and the Gaelic Revival."



SOMEBODY has said somewhere that the process of liking one's mother-in-law resembles the acquirement of a taste for such edibles as the softer and more fragrant cheeses and such drinkables as mescal and *tequila*. A certain acute repugnance has to be overcome at the start, and the reason for it is that when a man meets his mother-in-law for the first time, it is usually at so early a stage of his acquaintance with his wife that he is still much in love. He sees in his mother-in-law the portrait of his wife as she will appear some thirty years hence, and it is not a flattering one. Unconsciously he resents it and his resentment takes the form of hating the unflattering portrait.

The more he loves his wife, the worse he hates his mother-in-law; and it is therefore no reflection on the man about whom the following story is told that he never compromised in this attitude toward his mother-in-law throughout a long married life. It persisted up to the time of his death.

"Promise me," she said with almost a gasp, "that you will ride with mother in the same carriage at my funeral."

"All right, Maria, if you insist on it I will," he said, his body shaken with sobs, "but I'll tell you right now that it'll take all the pleasure out of the day for me."

ACCORDING to my friend Phil Johnson of Los Angeles, two deaf and dumb tourists were engaged in an earnest conversation on an ocean steamer when they were observed by two college students who immediately began with the utmost seriousness to imitate the digital language of the deaf-mutes. One of the deaf-mutes noticed them and nudged his companion, who regarded the two students closely for a few moments and then turned to his deaf-mute friend. He made several rapid gestures with his fingers, hands and one elbow. What he said was:

"F-o-r-e-i-g-n-e-r-s!"

LAUGH By MONTAGUE GLASS

Rea Irvin

IF YOUR wife scolds you for eating your breakfast with the morning paper propped up on the sugar bowl, she's quite right. Be warned by the story of the instructor in biology in a New York City high school who always brought his lunch to school with him and ate it alone while studying a textbook.

"This afternoon," he said, addressing his class, after eating what he considered to be a satisfactory meal in that he had consumed the contents of a brown paper package and an entire chapter of a recent work on invertebrates, "this afternoon I propose to show you a very fine specimen of a dissected frog which I have in this parcel."

Undoing the parcel, he disclosed some sandwiches, a hard boiled egg and a small apple.

IN THAT excellent publication, London Punch, appeared recently a picture of a most forbidding looking woman entering the study of a mild clergyman.

"Mister Smith," she says, "do you remember uniting in marriage me and Henry Binks, bachelor, of this parish?"

"Yes, I think I do," the clergyman replied. "Yes, yes, certainly I do. I married you, Mrs. Binks. I remember it clearly."

"Well, what are we going to do about it?" she demands. "He's escaped."

BANKS and banking methods are a profound mystery to me. What, for instance, do banks do with all that money which depositors are so gullible as to confide to their care? Indubitably such acute monetary experts as Mr. Ford and Mr. Edison know. I see also that Mr. Chaplin has broken into print as a writer on financial topics with a view I suppose to making people call him Mr. Charles Chaplin. Well then, even Mr. Charles Chaplin probably understands the whole arcana of the banker's craft, but I don't, and there are millions of others who don't—including Mr. Max Gubin.

Mr. Gubin is in business as a manufacturer of fine pants and the other day the cashier of his bank rang him up to say that he was overdrawn two hundred dollars.

"What do you mean—overdrawn two hundred dollars!" Mr. Gubin exclaimed. It was a rhetorical question, not calling for an answer, but the cashier replied nevertheless.

"I mean," he said, "that you have exhausted your balance here and have drawn a check for two hundred dollars which we have unintentionally paid. In other words, Mr. Gubin, you have two hundred dollars of our money which doesn't belong to you."

"And that is all the reason why you rung me up?" Mr. Gubin inquired.

"Yes, sir," the cashier said.

"Well, will you be so good and look it up what for a balance I had in your bank this day last month?"

Mr. Gubin asked.

"You had two thousand dollars," the cashier replied after an interval.

Mr. Gubin drew a great breath before making the unanswerable comeback.

"And did I ring you up?" he bellowed.

THE Ristorante Giardini di Volterra

in San Francisco is noted for the excellence of its *paste al sugo*, which is the Italian generic term for all kinds of macaroni, ravioli, lasagne and spaghetti. It is also noted for the urbanity of its headwaiter, Joe, who is the most obliging headwaiter in San Francisco, where headwaiters are much more obliging and much less mercenary than in New York.

Joe is at every patron's elbow half a dozen times during the course of a small meal and if necessary will smoothly enter the conversation from behind a diner's chair.

Recently, says Grant Carpenter, an ex-army officer was dining with a friend and the officer told a story about something that happened at reveille. He pronounced it *revely*, rhyming it with *Beverly*, and the friend objected to it. He was a purist in matters

of pronunciation and gave the word its full French pronunciation of *reveille*. The argument became quite heated, the officer insisting upon *revely* and his friend asserting it was *reveille*, until Joe the headwaiter overheard them.

"Excuse-a me, gentlemen," he said. "I am in thees-a business now many years, and the word is pronounced, I assure you, *ravioli*."

ADMIRAL McGOWAN, says

Thomas F. Ford, the gifted literary editor of a Los Angeles paper, is a native of South Carolina and returned to his home town in that State for a short visit prior to the World War. He was struck by the large number of negroes on the streets wearing gaudy uniforms. Most of them were strangers to the Admiral, but after a while he met an old negro acquaintance, Tom Mason, who was most elaborately attired. He wore gold epaulettes, a plumed chapeau, a brilliant red sash and a glittering sword as distinctive features of the general dazzling effect.

After friendly greetings, the Admiral asked Tom what occasion had brought all the uniformed negroes to town.

"Admurl," said Tom, "dis is de yearly annual secession of de uniform rank of de 'Sociated Sons an' Daughters of I Will Arise. An' niggers is hyuh fum all ovah de State, tendin' de convention."

"Well," said the Admiral, "from your uniform I imagine you must be an official of high rank."

"Yes suh, Admurl, I is," replied Tom. "I is de Royal High Ruler an' Supreme King."

"That surely is a superlatively exalted title," said Admiral McGowan. "You must be the highest official of the order."

"No suh, Admurl," said the Royal High Ruler and Supreme King modestly, "dey is five above me."

BARNEY BERNARD the well known comedian says that on a railroad train leaving Jersey City a man was beating a little boy, and as the man was a member of a tribe which is notoriously kind to little children, one of his fellow travelers was outraged by the spectacle.

"Here!" he exclaimed. "You stop beating that boy this minute."

"What do you mean—stop beating him?" the man protested. "The boy is my own son—for my sins."

"I don't care who he is," the humane fellow traveler said. "You lay another hand on that boy and I'll make trouble for you."

"You will what?" the father cried.

"I'll make trouble for you, that's all," the boy's defender said.

The inhumane father released his son and smiled sadly at his fellow traveler.

"Listen, my friend," he said. "Three weeks ago this boy's mother, my wife, eloped on me with a traveling salesman; last week my house burned down without a cent of insurance; yesterday the sheriff closed my store not five minutes after I heard that my poor

mother *olav hasholom* died in New Brunswick. Today I am taking my little boy to his grandmother's funeral so as to give him anyhow a little pleasure, and what does he do, y'understand, but he just now goes to work and swallows the railroad tickets on me."

He laughed a short, exceedingly bitter laugh.

"And you would make trouble for me!" he concluded.



Ukridge's Accident Syndicate

(Continued from page 99)

reckless enough to drink it, at eight shillings the bottle, remains a secret between its maker and his maker; but three glasses of it were enough to convert Teddy Weeks from a mild and rather oily young man into a truculent swashbuckler.

He quarreled with us all. With the soup he was tilting at Victor Beamish's theories of art; the fish found him ridiculing Bertram Fox's views on the future of the motion picture; and by the time the leg of chicken with dandelion salad arrived—or, as some held, string salad; opinions varied on this point—the hell-brew had so wrought on him that he had begun to lecture Ukridge on his misspent life and was urging him in accents audible across the street to go out and get a job and thus acquire sufficient self-respect to enable him to look himself in the face in a mirror without wincing. Not, added Teddy Weeks with what we all thought uncalled for offensiveness, that any amount of self-respect was likely to do that. Having said which, he called imperiously for another eight bobs' worth.

We gazed at one another wanly. However excellent the end toward which all this was tending, there was no denying that it was hard to bear. But policy kept us silent. We recognized that this was Teddy Weeks's evening and that he must be humored. Victor Beamish said meekly that Teddy had cleared up a lot of points which had been troubling him for a long time. Bertram Fox agreed that there was much in what Teddy had said about the future of the close-up. And even Ukridge, though his haughty soul was seared to its foundations by the latter's personal remarks, promised to take his homily to heart and act upon it at the earliest possible moment.

"You'd better!" said Teddy Weeks belligerently, biting off the end of one of Barolini's best cigars. "And there's another thing—don't let me hear of your coming and sneaking people's socks again."

"Very well, laddie," said Ukridge humbly.

"If there is one person in the world that I despise," said Teddy, bending a red-eyed gaze on the offender, "it's a snock-seeker—a seek-snocker—a—well, you know what I mean."

We hastened to assure him that we knew what he meant, and he relapsed into a lengthy stupor, from which he emerged three-quarters of an hour later to announce that he didn't know what we intended to do but that he was going. We said that we were going too, and we paid the bill and did so.

Teddy Weeks's indignation on discovering us gathered about him upon the pavement outside the restaurant was intense, and he expressed it freely. Among other things he said—which was not true—that he had a reputation to keep up in Soho.

"It's all right, Teddy, old horse," said Ukridge soothingly. "We just thought you would like to have all your old pals round you when you did it."

"Did it? Did what?"

"Why, had the accident."

Teddy Weeks glared at him truculently. Then his mood seemed to change abruptly and he burst into a loud and hearty laugh.

"Well, of all the silly ideas!" he cried amusedly. "I'm not going to have an accident. You don't suppose I ever seriously intended to have an accident, do you? It was just my fun." Then, with another sudden change of mood he seemed to become a victim of an acute unhappiness. He stroked Ukridge's arm affectionately and a tear rolled down his cheek. "Just my fun," he repeated. "You don't mind my fun, do you?" he asked pleadingly. "You like my fun, don't you? All my fun. Never meant to have an accident at all. Just wanted dinner." The gay humor of it all overcame his sorrow once more. "Funniest thing ever heard," he said cordially. "Didn't want accident, wanted dinner. Dinner daxident, danner dixident," he added, driving home his point. "Well, good night all," he said cheerily. And, stepping off the curb on to a banana skin, was instantly knocked ten feet by a passing lorry.

"Two ribs and an arm," said the doctor five minutes later, superintending the removal proceedings. "Gently with that stretcher."

It was two weeks before we were informed by the authorities of Charing Cross Hospital that the patient was in a condition to receive visitors. A whip-round secured the price of a basket of fruit, and Ukridge and I were deputed by the shareholders to deliver it with their compliments and kind inquiries.

"Hullo," we said in a hushed bedside manner when finally admitted to his presence.

"Sit down, gentlemen," replied the invalid.

I must confess even in that first moment to having experienced a slight feeling of surprise. It was not like Teddy Weeks to call us gentlemen. Ukridge, however, seemed to notice nothing amiss.

"Well, well, well," he said buoyantly. "And how are you, laddie? We've brought you a few fragments of fruit."

"I am getting along capitally," replied Teddy Weeks, still in that odd, precise way which had made his opening words strike me as curious. "And I should like to say that in my opinion England has reason to be proud of the alertness and enterprise of her great journals. The excellent quality of their reading matter, the ingenuity of their various competitions, and above all the go-ahead spirit which has resulted in this accident insurance scheme are beyond praise . . . Have you got that down?" he inquired.

Ukridge and I looked at each other. We had been told that Teddy was practically normal again, but this sounded like delirium.

"Have we got what down, old horse?" asked Ukridge gently.

Teddy Weeks seemed surprised.

"Aren't you reporters?"

"How do you mean, reporters?"

"I thought you had come from one of these weekly papers that have been paying me insurance money, to interview me," said Teddy Weeks.

Ukridge and I exchanged another glance. An uneasy glance this time. I think that already a grim foreboding had begun to cast its shadow over us.

"Surely you remember me, Teddy, old horse?" said Ukridge anxiously.

Teddy Weeks knit his brow, concentrating painfully.

"Why, of course," he said at last. "You're Ukridge, aren't you?"

"That's right. Ukridge."

"Of course. Ukridge."

"Yes. Ukridge. Funny, your forgetting me!"

"Yes," said Teddy Weeks. "It's the effect of the shock I got when that thing bowled me over. I must have been struck on the head, I suppose. It has had the effect of rendering my memory rather uncertain. The doctors here are very interested. They say it is a most unusual case. I can remember some things perfectly, but in some ways my memory is a complete blank."

"Oh, but I say, old horse!" quavered Ukridge. "I suppose you haven't forgotten about that insurance, have you?"

"Oh no, I remember that!"

Ukridge breathed a relieved sigh.

"I was a subscriber to a number of weekly papers," went on Teddy Weeks. "They are paying me insurance money now."

"Yes, yes, old horse," cried Ukridge. "But what I mean is, you remember the Syndicate, don't you?"

Teddy Weeks raised his eyebrows.

"Syndicate. What syndicate?"

"Why, when we all got together and put up the money to pay for the subscriptions to these papers and drew lots to choose which of us should go out and have an accident and collect the money. And you drew it, don't you remember?"

Utter astonishment, and a shocked astonishment at that, spread itself over Teddy Weeks's countenance. The man seemed outraged.

"I certainly remember nothing of the kind," he said severely. "I cannot imagine myself for a moment consenting to become a party to what from your own account would appear to have been a criminal conspiracy to obtain money under false pretenses from a number of weekly papers."

"But, laddie—"

"However," said Teddy Weeks, "if there is any truth in this story, no doubt you have documentary evidence to support it?"

Ukridge looked at me. I looked at Ukridge. There was a long silence.

"Shift-ho, old horse?" said Ukridge sadly. "No use staying on here."

"No," I replied with equal gloom. "May as well go."

"Glad to have seen you," said Teddy Weeks, "and thanks for the fruit."

P. G. Wodehouse, the man whose laughter echoes around the world, spins another mirth-rousing tale in COSMOPOLITAN for June, on sale May tenth.

SOUP MAKES THE WHOLE MEAL TASTE BETTER

Day by day in every way
We gain in health and vigor
With Campbell's aid our health is made—
Just watch us growing bigger!



Tempting!

And no wonder! That fragrant plate of Campbell's Tomato Soup, which is so tempting to your appetite, is pure tomato—the finest red-ripe fruit that grows! The tasty tomato juices and the rich tomato "meat" are strained to a smooth, delicious puree. A delight to the appetite!

Cream of Tomato

Golden country butter is blended with Campbell's Tomato Soup and delicate seasoning is added by the skilled hands of our famous French chefs. Serve it as a Cream of Tomato for a very special treat either for the family meal or when you are entertaining. It takes but a few minutes to prepare it according to the simple directions on the can. And it tastes so good!

21 kinds

12 cents a can

Campbell's SOUPS

LOOK FOR THE RED-AND-WHITE LABEL

"Daylight"

(Continued from page 57)

that everybody must stop whatever they were doing and rally at the bedside of the invalid, who was beginning to have one of his attacks which might prove fatal.

Without waiting even to put on his coat Ben flew on swift noiseless feet to the sick chamber.

Delight was there first but Ben was the one who lifted the old man into a position which relieved the pain and made it possible to breathe more easily.

"Thanks, Ben," he gasped feebly. "Delight, heat up some of that medicine. This plaster I've got on has lost its strength."

His daughter, well trained in obedience, hastened to the kitchen, leaving Ben to support the sufferer in the most comfortable position.

When she had put the can of medicinal clay in a dish of hot water she returned to the sick room. On the way back she noticed that Ben's door stood open and that he had left every light in the room burning. Actuated by an economical motive she stepped in to push the electric switch.

The scattered papers on his table attracted her passing attention.

He had been writing. She wondered if she would recognize the language used by the household mystery and idly picked up a page to see.

She left the room five minutes later without having turned off the lights. It seemed rather better not to.

VI

BEN was by this time strongly entrenched in the position of Blaine Brewster's unofficial nurse.

The next morning her father told Daylight: "Let him off from other duties so he can take care of me. I like to have him around. He understands me a lot better than most people who speak my own language."

Ben, who was noiselessly putting the sick room to rights, looked inquiringly at the invalid when he began to speak, but seeing that he was addressing his daughter went on about his tasks.

"That's something I want to talk to you about, daddy," Daylight replied to her father. "The young man you speak of must not remain in this house another day. I intend to discharge him before night."

"Why, why," sputtered Blaine, "what do you mean? Just when I get a little efficient attention you want to go and ruin it. What for?"

"Because I do not trust him. Don't ask me why, father, but rely upon my woman's intuition. I have taken an instinctive dislike to the man and you know I am never wrong about such things. He's a smug, sycophantic villain."

"Hush, Delight!" with a meaning look toward the object of her remarks.

"He can't understand me. That's another thing against him. He's such a dumbbell—"

"Slang, daughter?"

"Yes. It's the only word that describes him."

"It's silly to hold against him the fact that he is stupid."

"It isn't that alone. If it were I wouldn't mind. But the maids have been complaining about him. They are afraid of him. Hilda says that he approached her last night with some kind of a proposition that she could not understand but she says she is sure it was something wicked."

Ben nearly dropped a flower vase when she began getting specific in her accusations. He had his mouth open to begin an indignant denial but resolutely closed it again and went on about his business.

"Drat the maids!" cursed the sick man. "I should think they might stand being insulted if it would make my last hours a little more peaceful. Ben!"

The slave approached with alacrity.

"His face isn't wicked," Blaine pointed out; "stupid, I admit, but not villainous."

"Stupidity sometimes reaches a point where it becomes bestiality," Delight pursued relentlessly. "To look at his face makes me shudder."

She did—convincingly.

Her father was not beaten down even yet. He had never given up an argument in his life. When all other weapons failed he always used the club of his illness.

"He may be a brute, although I rather doubt that, but he is the only man I've ever seen who can lift me around without puffing."

"And yet you would expose your daughter to the whim of a mere muscular beast like that. What chance would I have against him if he should suddenly go mad or something?"

"No more chance than you would have against any man. But Ben wouldn't hurt you. The poor idiot loves you."

At that psychological moment, just as if he understood that he was the subject of contention, Ben knelt at her feet and, looking up with eyes that were as gentle as those of a mating squab, attempted to kiss her hand.

Delight nearly pushed him over backward with the violence of her rejection of his proffered homage.

And she got her way about having Ben discharged, too. She had inherited some of her father's stubbornness and while she seldom called it into play it was there all the time, and when she really felt that she had to get her own way she could accomplish it amid falling heavens.

"When I'm gone," her father said reproachfully, "I trust you will be sorry." Then he added: "I imagine that's too much to expect. Good by, Ben. You're the only person who understands me."

VII

BEN was a stubborn individual, too. No one had taken that into account. He got the idea that he was fired all right when Delight led him to the back gate and threw his hat out into the middle of the alley, but he did not seem to have any other place to go.

He stayed disconsolately there by the gate all day long. The maids reported this to Delight, who knew it anyway from having looked out of the upstairs windows every little while. When she found that he was still there she smiled every time,

partly maliciously and partly, although she would not have admitted it, with genuine feminine pleasure at the tribute to herself.

This was the fooliest game that had ever been played by grown-ups. She hoped it would rain on him out there. If it didn't she would call the police and have him arrested. He deserved everything that could possibly happen to him.

Her father grew much more irritable and whiney. Delight had not realized until then how much Ben had taken off her shoulders during the few days he had been a member of the household.

He mourned, "Tomorrow it will be just ten years since your sainted mother went to her heavenly reward and left me to wait and weep." He closed his eyes and wept a little then and there. "It won't be long now, mother, before the barriers will be swept aside. Without proper care I shall probably not live through my next attack."

Delight sometimes cynically wondered whether, from her celestial vantage point, her mother did not view the approaching reunion with apprehension. There was no reason to suppose that Blaine Brewster would cheer up, even when he got his gold harp.

And she remained deaf to her father's hints that she get Ben back. She promised to hire another man in his place but Ben was officially through—finished. She refused to discuss her aversion further. It existed and that was enough.

She hated him.

And yet she always smiled when she thought how much she hated him. It was a pleasure to dislike anyone the way she did the solitary outside guardian of the back gate.

He was still there the next morning when the Brewster cortège left for the cemetery according to an ancient annual custom to weep a little at mother's grave, and view with melancholy pleasure the transitory nature of all earthly things.

Blaine Brewster went in a wheel chair which Delight propelled up the hill to the high ground where the cemetery was located. Being motive power for her father's pushabout was no child's play. Blaine weighed nearly two hundred even yet and Delight was rather small. She did not have brawn proportionate to her determination.

It would have been very easy to have hired an automobile for the trip but Mr. Brewster couldn't ride in automobiles, or thought he couldn't.

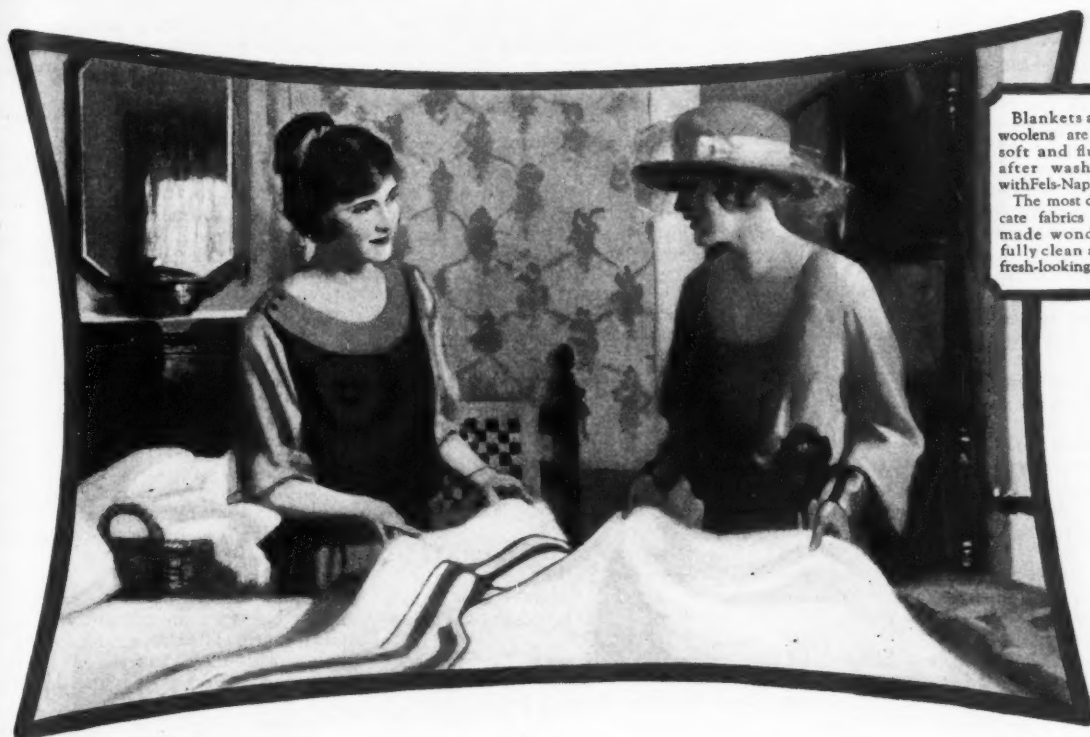
"Humph!" grunted the invalid as Delight struggled against the force of gravity. "Don't you wish Ben was here now?"

"I do not!" his daughter replied with what little breath she had left.

To regain her wind and to rest generally Delight headed for the other side of the street. At least the crossing was level.

Midway between curbs came a wild honking of an automobile horn. Delight, winded but still keeping her head, looked to the right and left.

A machine was tearing down the hill from above them. A woman at the wheel was waving wildly at them to get out of the way.



Clean — deep down through every thread!



Real Naptha! You can tell by the smell

Use water of any temperature with Fels-Naptha. Boil clothes with Fels-Naptha, if you wish. The real naptha in Fels-Naptha makes the dirt let go, no matter whether the water is cool, lukewarm or hot.



The original and genuine naptha soap, in the red-and-green wrapper. Buy it in the convenient ten-bar carton.

That's the beauty of clothes washed with Fels-Naptha—the sanitary soap. They get more than surface-cleaning.

No matter how thick or how woolly the fabrics, the real naptha in Fels-Naptha searches out the most deeply-seated dirt, gently and safely breaking its grip from the tenacious woolen fibres, (as of course, it does with thin silk or cotton goods). Then the soapy water, flushing through the fibres, carries all the dirt away.

The clothes are doubly cleansed from dirt, body oils, odors—all the way through—purified wholly and completely. They are made *hygienically* clean, for Fels-Naptha does all that good soap does, plus all that real naptha does.

When you realize the close relation of clean clothes to health, you will never be satisfied with less thorough cleaning.

Fels-Naptha is more than soap. It is more than naptha. It is *splendid* soap and *real* naptha so blended that it gives you the best of these two great cleaners in one golden, sanitary bar. Get Fels-Naptha at your grocer's today! Give your home the benefit of Fels-Naptha Cleanliness.

GET an idea of how helpful Fels-Naptha is. Send 2¢ in stamps for sample bar. Address Fels-Naptha Soap, Philadelphia.

FELS-NAPTHA

THE GOLDEN BAR WITH THE CLEAN NAPTHA ODOR

© 1923, Fels & Co. Philadelphia

Delight suspected the truth—that the brakes were not holding and that the chauffeur did not know what else to do—and summoned all of her jaded strength for a swift spurt to safety.

She would have made it with a little room to spare if the lady driver had not, in a fascination of horror, swerved slightly to the left so as to bear down upon them in the very spot they were heading for.

It was too late for Delight to check the momentum of the wheel chair with its ponderous burden and to start in the other direction. She might have abandoned her father to his fate and saved herself. That, of course, never occurred to her.

Wide-eyed, terror stricken but resigned, she watched the juggernaut.

So she didn't see what it was that really struck her, that hurled her and the wheel chair back out of danger. The impact was pretty violent and would have knocked her down except for the fact that she was hanging on to the handle of the chair.

As it was, she heard rather than saw the berserk automobile strike something else, something that yielded with a sickening thud.

The reeling car was gone. Delight and her father were safe.

But in the road lay the catapult which had hurled them back to safety—Ben.

Crumpled, unconscious, pathetic.

Delight and her father gazed horror stricken at their rescuer.

Then they started towards him—both of them. Blaine Brewster had risen from his chair and neither of them had noticed it.

Delight got there first. She was like that.

But her father lumbered up no less determinedly and when she started to take Ben's head in her lap he stopped her. "Here, let me do that. He's my nurse, you know."

Delight only held him tenderly closer. "He's my everything."

Nevertheless it was the old man who lifted Ben from the pavement and placed him in his own wheel chair to transport to the nearest house.

VIII

BEN regained consciousness in character—that is, he opened his eyes the next day in his room at the Brewster home and murmured "Daylight! Daylight! Daylight!" as if it were a warning, a caress and a prayer all combined.

She was there. So was her father, who had helped her watch through the night. So also was Ivan Jones, who had been sent for in case—

It was the girl, though, who knelt beside him. "Here I am."

He started to make unintelligible sounds such as had been his language for the last week.

"You may as well speak English," suggested Delight. "You've been raving in American slang all during your delirium."

Ben groaned. "Have I ruined my chances forever?" he pleaded.

"Absolutely. After what I've heard you say I'll never let you escape."

"What?" Even a man who is nearly dead can be revived by a magic incantation.

"I'll even help you win that bet from

Ivan." She kissed him gingerly on one of the unbandaged spots. "Sorry, Ivan, to make you lose but we're going to need money for house furnishings."

"You don't get any from me," Ivan responded blithely. "He wrote me a note in the middle of the week calling off the bet. The darn fool said he was too much in love to want to win anything but you with his first kiss if he ever got it."

"Listen!" interrupted the injured man. "For gosh sake, let me talk. Am I to understand, Daylight, darling, that we are to be married?"

"We are if you live."

IX

IT WOULD be good cheerful propaganda to record here that Blaine Brewster, after his marvelous recovery during the emergency of the accident to Ben, never suffered another day's illness. There's a considerable precedent for that in "The Miracle Man" and other psychopathic resurrections in film and fiction.

But the truth must be told. The night of Delight's wedding day found her father back in bed with an honest-to-goodness attack of incipient paralysis and the bridal couple spent their honeymoon in two shifts, one nursing him days and the other nights.

They were never off duty for ten minutes together at any one time because if they tried it Blaine always had an almost fatal fit.

However, they are trying a new doctor this week.

Maybe he can cure him.

Or something.

You will count it one of the most enjoyable half-hours you ever spent when you read the next story by Frank R. Adams in June COSMOPOLITAN.

The Great God Four-Flush

(Continued from page 87)

wonder? And he's so darn fast nobody's ever hit him hard enough to mark him. If he don't stop this bird I don't eat for a week. Look at him."

"I'm looking, thank you," said Gwynne Gunning in her heart and tried to wrench her eyes away.

And could not, any more than you can tear the tides from the moon.

The pulse in her throat was choking her.

As she watched him, with that same indifferent, disdainful air, protect himself and hammer the big dark brute to pieces, her mind, in spite of her desperate efforts to close it, seeped full of him. She thrilled to the sulky, surprised line that came between his eyes when the big fellow landed twice on his chin. Caught his trick of swaying his head from side to side. The half smile that curved his young mouth when he went into the clinches.

Oh, she was crazy! It was silly. A prize fighter. She grasped at her pose, her newer self.

Yet—people felt this way. This was the half forgotten thing she was missing in life. This was the explanation of many, many things in the world nothing else could explain. This mesmerism. Cover it, hide it, deny it as you would—

This was real.

She didn't want it!

Men, she knew, felt like this sometimes when they saw a beautiful woman. But women—no woman ever admitted such a thing. Could not admit it. Oh, it was impossible!

She heard the thud of a body hitting the canvas.

The boy came back to his corner. His hair was rumpled and she saw the least suggestion of a curl where it touched his close-set ears.

It gave her a pang of delight.

Almost without realizing what she did, Gwynne Gunning looked swiftly at the men about her. How soft they looked. How ugly.

As the first faint gleams of dawn came shyly through the drawn blinds of her sleeping porch, Gwynne Gunning buried her golden curls in her scented baby pillows, and by daring at last to imagine that she was in his arms went sweetly and softly to sleep, with the stain of tears on her cheeks and the marks of her small white teeth in her lower lip.

III

"Do you love me?"

"You know I do."

"Then why don't you say so?"

"What's the use of saying it? If I didn't I wouldn't be here."

Gwynne kicked her feet into the air and giggled happily.

The firelight fell on her golden curls, tumbled about her little flushed face, and on the soft chinchilla collar that rolled back from the exquisite line of her neck.

Lying flat on the rug, her head against Joe's knees, she put up one hand to touch his hair.

"Isn't this wonderful?" she asked softly. "Way up on top of a funny old mountain, away from the whole world? I forget everything up here. I love the rain outside when it shuts us away from everyone else."

She turned her head so that, against the flaming logs, she could see the boy's head. How she worshiped the proud, free, strong line of it.

"You've got to go back, haven't you?" she whispered.

He nodded and she caught the swift, teasing twinkle of his hazel-gray eyes.

"Why are you laughing?" she demanded, snuggling her head closer to his knees.

"I didn't."

"You did. You're always laughing at me. I love you too much."

"Do you?"

"Yes. Gosh, I know you've got to go back if you're going to fight next week. But, sweetheart, you've walked a thousand



There is constant danger in an oily skin

IF your skin has the habit of continually getting oily and shiny, you cannot begin too soon to correct this condition.

A certain amount of oil in your skin is necessary to keep it smooth, velvety, supple.

But *too much* oil actually tends to promote an unhealthy condition of your skin.

A skin that is too oily is constantly liable to infection from dust and dirt, and thus encourages the formation of blackheads, and other skin troubles that come from outside infection.

You can correct an oily skin by using *each night* the following simple treatment:

FIRST cleanse your skin by washing in your usual way with Woodbury's Facial Soap and luke-warm water. Wipe off the surplus moisture, but leave the skin slightly damp. Now, with warm water work up a heavy lather of Woodbury's Facial Soap in your hands. Apply it to your face and rub it into the pores thoroughly—always with an upward and outward motion. Rinse with warm water, then with cold—the colder the better. If possible, rub your face for thirty seconds with a piece of ice.

Keep up this treatment persistently, and within a week or ten days you will be surprised to see what an improvement it has made in your complexion.

This is only one of the famous treatments given in the booklet which is wrapped around every cake of Woodbury's Facial Soap. Special treatments for each different type of skin are given in this booklet.

Get a cake of Woodbury's today—begin tonight the treatment *your* skin needs.

A 25-cent cake of Woodbury's lasts a month or six weeks for regular toilet use, including any of the special Woodbury treatments. The same qualities that give Woodbury's its beneficial effect on the skin make it ideal for regular use. Woodbury's also comes in convenient 3-cake boxes.

A complete miniature set of the Woodbury skin preparations

For 25 cents we will send you a complete miniature set of the Woodbury skin preparations, containing:

A trial size cake of Woodbury's Facial Soap
A sample tube of the new Woodbury's Facial Cream

A sample tube of Woodbury's Cold Cream
A sample box of Woodbury's Facial Powder

With the treatment booklet, "*A Skin You Love to Touch.*"

Send for this set today. Address The Andrew Jergens Co., 1605 Spring Grove Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio. If you live in Canada, address The Andrew Jergens Co., Limited, 1605 Sherbrooke St., Perth, Ontario. English Agents: H. C. Quelch & Co., 4 Ludgate Square, London, E. C. 4.

miles up here. I should think you'd walked enough to train for forty fights."

At that he laughed aloud. And he had the stirring, warm laugh of a man who does not laugh often.

"Silly, I can't fight a boy like Georgie Farr on walking. I'll run five miles before breakfast from tomorrow on. How'd you like it if he beat me?"

Gwynne considered, always breathlessly conscious of his nearness, of the fragrance of clean living and freshness that came from him.

"If he hurt you, or cut you up, I'd scratch his eyes out. But I shouldn't mind your getting beaten. You're so cocky. I'd like a chance to baby you just once."

"You're my little mama all the time," he said, turning to look full at her. His eyes had gone black as the pupils dilated.

Then his gaze went back to the fire, and she lay quietly content, thinking.

Oh, it was all so strange, this double life she was leading.

Here they were, she and Joe Flynn, alone in this mountain lodge. Outside in the rickety garage was the battered, dark flivver he had bought so they might slip away unrecognized. Here she was no longer Gwynne Gunning. She was just—Joe Flynn's girl.

"You're so wonderful!" she murmured with a happy sigh.

He was wonderful. How panicky she had been when after five weeks of struggle she had schemed to meet him. He had looked so adorable in one of those plain blue shirts he always wore, and the quiet blue suit. Not at all like the descriptions she had heard of pork-and-bean fighters.

Shy and self-conscious he certainly was. Puzzled and reserved. But he was shy of her surroundings and of her position and not of the woman.

It was his first venture into the class she represented and he moved, oh! so cautiously.

Well, that was the thing that had swept her deeper and deeper into this love that possessed her. To him she was never Gwynne Gunning. Never a famous and idolized picture star.

She was just a woman. She had never realized how sick she was of all the pretense, how deeply she longed for natural, heavenly hours of being Alma Schwartz grown up.

In his cool young arrogance, in his confident, limited young philosophy of life, you loved a woman or you didn't. And his reserve, his coolness, his playful teasing fell just often enough before the dangerous, headlong rush of his passion.

Oh, all that was perfect! And governable. For passion is tied closer to the earth than any other human sense and its life must be the shortest.

But the thing that was beginning to strike terror into the very core of her being was the companionship that had sprung up between them. As though he tugged at her heart with every old instinct, every old desire of her life.

They were so *happy* together. And she had never been just plain happy in all her life before. They could be so overwhelmed with bubbling laughter.

He had a swift, clean, driving young mind. As ardent for knowledge as a child's. The twenty-one years of his adventurous life had been spent at close grips with the world, fighting for a living,

for something better than the rudiments of an education. He had an eager craving for finer, better, more worth while things. Her pretenses only annoyed him. He brought her back with one revealing sentence, one hot look, to real things.

"It don't matter what a thing is, if it's the truth it's bound to help you sooner or later," he had said to her once.

She was horribly afraid of losing him. Knew he hated his position.

And he understood her as no man ever had. For, in the last analysis, they came from the same source. Why, as kids they had actually played only a few blocks apart. He had fought his kid battles while she danced on the sidewalks almost within hailing distance. Then—then their lives had branched, but how strangely they had come back together after all these years. Like calling to like.

And still—*still she could not marry him.* He had never asked her. But she knew his hot young pride would never chance a refusal.

The hideous habit of years still bound her.

She could not abandon the rôle of Gwynne Gunning she had played and loved so long. Four-flushing had become a habit more deadly, more shriekingly insistent than the craving for the little white needle.

In the lonely nights she fought back those tears that leave lines and moaned into the blackness, "God help me, God help me," while her love and her pride fought.

Once away from him, back in her own world, among her satellites and her friends, she knew—and hated herself for knowing—that she could never go through with it.

Her soul—her strong, young, common soul—had been stifled in chinchilla.

She was ashamed of him. She sickened at the treachery. But she knew she would die if Gregg Austin, if Laurine Johnstone, if any of the crowd she had upstaged and patronized, knew that she loved a *prize fighter*.

They couldn't see him as she saw him. She had gathered, sneakily, a fair estimate of what people of her world thought of the boys who fought for their amusement. They could never rate him as different from the rest nor figure that she, Gwynne Gunning, was of his own.

Gwynne's social aspirations were very definite.

No more hanging on the outer fringe would satisfy her. A position that merely meant appearing for charity benefits or as a lion or a curiosity to amuse the fashionable elect—which was the position achieved by most movie folk—was not the thing for which she had builded so long and so carefully.

There were a few who had penetrated, with the help of circumstances, to the Inner Shrine. A few whose names belonged on the intimate guest lists of the really smart younger set and the aristocratic old Californians. Candace Carr, for instance, had achieved real social distinction through her friendship with young Mrs. Billy Hitt. Jane Terry and her equally famous husband, Frederick Shaw, had been taken up by titled folk in London during their European tour. Immediately they became members of the exclusive circles of Los Angeles and San Francisco. Johnny Ingle had married a

Southern girl of much charm and breeding, and of course they "belonged."

That was the sort of thing Gwynne was playing for, the thing that had meant so much in her plans for the future. Gregg Austin could give it to her. Probably there was no other way in which she could gain it. And he knew as well as she did that it was the price he would have to pay for her. A price he was still considering.

Why, Joe had never owned dinner clothes in his life. His English tricked him here and there. All that might be changed in time if she were big enough. If she had only been the real thing herself, sure of herself, she might chance it. Though it never worked. She thought of the stories in the papers about girls and women who had married chauffeurs, elevator boys—anybody out of their class. It was never successful.

Oh, she had lived among shams so long they had become her gospel!

She had cheated so long honesty seemed beyond her.

She had flashes of big visions, only to slip sickeningly back.

She *dared* not—she who had let her father die alone for fear some nurse might recognize Gwynne Gunning.

The glamour of love that swept her, that was melting her, teaching her—wasn't strong enough.

She could still have both—even at the price of her honor and Joe's.

Her test had not come.

Only sometimes when she dreamed she must make a decision between the two idols of her soul, she awoke shuddering.

And now, as the fire leaped warmly and the rain pattered on the tin roof, she turned swiftly to him, holding him close in her arms, shaking with some strange fear.

"I love you so, I love you so," she said brokenly.

His arms hurt her.

"Why honey, you're not crying? What made my little mama cry? There, I love you. I love you better than anything else in the world."

His lips, clean and cool, found hers. And even as they lay so sweetly, she felt the heat pour into them and thrill her in every nerve. Felt his strong hands in her curls, jerking her head back.

"I could tear you to pieces," he said suddenly. "You're mine, do you hear? Aren't you?"

"Yes, oh yes! I want to be. All yours. I am."

"You'd better be," he said coldly.

And Gwynne Gunning could have screamed aloud.

For deep in her soul she heard the little mocking laugh of the monster she had created of herself. Heard the whip-crack of the Great God Four-Flush.

IV

IT WAS a very perfect dinner party.

Gwynne Gunning, in pale green sequins with a mass of lilies of the valley caught at her waist, knew that it was her supreme social effort. And her eyes narrowed a little as she glanced at Gregg Austin.

It was a great feather in her cap, catching Laurine Johnstone as the guest of honor.

Laurine Johnstone, whose advent into the films after years of stage triumphs was

Your smooth fresh face—what are you doing to keep it young?

Many famous and lovely women depend on this method

IN your mind you picture yourself always the same. But one, two years from now will your face be as fresh and smooth as it is today? Or will it be a little coarsened? With fine lines growing deeper around the eyes, the nose, your mouth? Will you discover one day, while you are still young, that your skin has grown old?

To save women's skin from this early ageing, to keep it young and soft in spite of modern strain and exposure, two famous formulae were developed.

Two creams, each so wonderful in its results that now literally millions of women depend on them.

Today in 56 different countries these women have decided that no other method gives quite that transparent freshness and velvet smoothness. And that no other has quite that magic efficacy against the drying and coarsening influence of the out-of-doors, or that extraordinary effect of freshening the complexion.

The cleansing cream that has doubled its users every two years

So marvelous is the softening, clarifying effect of Pond's Cold Cream on the skin that the number of women using it has actually doubled every two years.

Its special light consistency agrees with your skin. Its fine light oil gives your skin perfect suppleness and then is wiped off with the loosened dirt, so that your face has the exquisite freshness you want. It is never left heavy with cream.

In the whole world the most used of all vanishing creams

But the miracle of one cream's success is no greater than that of its sister cream. So unflinching is Pond's Vanishing Cream in its protection of the skin, so marvelously does it freshen



Photo by Brown Bros.

Marion Davies, whose complexion is extraordinarily fresh and young and who is now playing so charmingly in "When Knighthood Was in Flower," says—"My skin is constantly exposed to trying lights and I have to use a great deal of make-up, yet my complexion has kept young and beautifully smooth with Pond's Two Creams. I have used this method for years and know I can depend on it."

charming the reflection in your mirror! The powder is even, not in patches, because it clings evenly to the delicate film of cream. The appearance of your skin for the whole day will prove to you how wonderful for your skin these two creams are.

When you are tired in the evening use these two creams together before you go out. They soften out the lines and smooth away the worried tightness of your face. And always after a motor or railroad trip, cleanse with Pond's Cold Cream and then finish with the Vanishing Cream and powder.

To see how these two creams will actually improve your skin use this method regularly. Begin now by buying a jar or tube of each cream.

You will get them in any drugstore or department store. Neither can possibly clog the pores or cause the growth of hair. The Pond's Extract Company, New York.

These are the troubles that mar and age your skin

Read how this famous method corrects them

Sunburn, Windburn, Chapping

The daily repetition of weather damage does more to age your skin than any other single factor, but the process is so gradual you do not notice it until your skin has definitely coarsened. Do not let this happen. Be careful before the harm has taken hold. Keep your skin clean and soft and properly oiled with a nightly cleansing with Pond's Cold Cream. Then, always in the morning, smooth on Pond's Vanishing Cream. It forms a delicate but sure protection against any weather condition and the trying changes in temperature. This method will keep your skin soft and smooth always.

Premature Wrinkles, Scaling, Peeling

These are especially the troubles of a dry skin. To avoid them you must keep your skin soft day and night. Cleanse with plenty of Pond's Cold Cream nightly and leave some on over night. This will give your skin the oil it needs so badly. Now it cannot scale and peel. It will not develop the little lines that grow into wrinkles.

But do not let the day undo the results of this nightly oiling. Every morning smooth on Pond's Vanishing Cream liberally. It contains a wonderful daytime softening ingredient and prevents your skin from drying out again.

That Distressing Shine

Shine is often the result of excess oil in the glands. Your careful nightly cleansing with Pond's Cold Cream carries out this excess together with the dirt. This light cream wipes entirely off. Now in the morning smooth on Pond's Vanishing Cream. You can use plenty of it, because it has no oil. This will keep your skin lovely and fresh right to the end of the day.

But sometimes shine is due to a dry, tight skin. You must apply an extra amount of Pond's Cold Cream at night after the cleansing and let it stay on. See how gladly your skin will absorb the fine light oil of this cream, how it will soften and relax and the shine disappear. Put on the Vanishing Cream in the morning to keep this suppleness through the day and to hold the powder.

MAIL COUPON

WITH 10c.

TODAY

The Pond's Extract Co.
134N Hudson St., New York

Ten cents (10c) is enclosed for your special introductory tubes of the two creams every normal skin needs—enough of each cream for two weeks' ordinary toilet uses.

Name
Street
City State

This smoker says Edgeworth gets better and better

But it doesn't—and no
"improvements" are
contemplated

To begin with, we had better quote Mr. Whitlock's letter in full. Not in a boastful spirit, but so we can refer back to it farther down in the column.

2844 Accomac Street,
St. Louis, Missouri

Larus & Brother Company,
Richmond, Va.
Gentlemen:

I wish to take this opportunity to tell you what I think of your Edgeworth Plug Slice Tobacco.

I have been a pipe smoker for about 18 years and during that time have naturally tried many different brands and blends of tobacco. I could not seem to find an ideal blend until about six months ago when, at the suggestion of a friend, I tried a pipe of Edgeworth Plug Slice.

I have been a constant user of Edgeworth since and can truthfully say that "Day by day in every way Edgeworth is getting better and better."

You have my permission to use this letter in any way you may desire if by so doing it will enable other pipe smokers to find a really cool, enjoyable and perfectly satisfactory man's smoke.

I beg to remain,

Edgeworthly yours,
Al. F. Whitlock.

We are indeed glad Edgeworth has given Mr. Whitlock such unqualified satisfaction, but we feel obliged to sidestep his suggestion that "day by day in every way Edgeworth is getting better and better."



Our constant aim is quite to the contrary. Just as it is, Edgeworth pleases thousands and thousands of pipe smokers throughout the country.

If we should try to "improve" Edgeworth or change it in the least, we might be doing an injustice to the men who have smoked

Edgeworth for years and years and who expect to find it always the same good smoking tobacco.

To add to our list of friends we are always glad to send free samples of both Edgeworth Plug Slice and Ready-Rubbed.

Just drop a postcard to Larus & Brother Co., 61 South 21st Street, Richmond, Va. If you will also add the name and address of your tobacco dealer, we shall appreciate your courtesy.

To Retail Tobacco Merchants: If your dealer cannot supply you with Edgeworth, Larus & Brother Company will gladly send you prepaid by parcel post a one- or two-dozen carton of any size of Edgeworth Plug Slice or Ready-Rubbed for the same price you would pay the jobber.

a sensation, had looked askance upon the picture colony when she first arrived in Hollywood with her titled husband.

During her European tours she had dined in many famous houses. But she watched with genuine amazement the splendor of the silver, the perfection of the service, the magnificence of the decoration, the epicurean food in this movie palace.

The guests were a delightful blend of the best the picture people had to offer, and the cream of Gregg Austin's set. Oh well! it was rumored Gwynne Gunning was going to marry young Austin and his millions.

Yes, Miss Johnstone was impressed.

And she was very cordial and friendly to her young hostess.

Yet even while Gwynne rejoiced in the success of her party, her mind was acutely conscious of what was to come. They were going to the fights as a slumming novelty for her guests.

It was very late, of course, when they arrived. Half the fights were over.

Gwynne, wrapping the folds of a new chinchilla evening cloak about her, was glad of that.

The thrill of seeing Joe in the ring, of watching the grace and beauty of him, in the light of the glorious secret of her heart, had never abated.

Then she was proud that she belonged to him.

But the knife twisted in her heart as she tried to picture him with these guests of hers.

Just how it happened no one ever seemed to know.

Farr was a good boy but he had figured to be easy for Joe Flynn. He had never laid a glove on Joe and for the first three rounds the favorite cut him to ribbons.

But suddenly it had happened. And the great mass was silent with that quick, strange prescience of an elemental crowd.

He had caught Joe coming off the ropes. Caught him with the one "haymaker" he had. Lifted him off his feet and dropped him on the back of his head.

And instead of the proud, splendid young figure so strong and graceful, Joe Flynn lay ominously still, his young face turned blindly up to the pitiless glare of the lights.

"That boy's hurt," said Laurine Johnstone's husband quietly.

A woman screamed.

And the mass of silent men broke into wild, hoarse murmurs.

The referee bending over the still figure. Handlers. Towels. Pails. A small grizzled man with a black case. The word "stretcher."

And still the boy had not moved.

Georgie Farr was sobbing. It swept the crowd to its first note of hysteria.

Gwynne Gunning sat with a smile frozen on her face.

Everything was all right. He'd get up in a minute.

But he was hurt, suffering. She must go to him.

Her body seemed paralyzed. She felt her heart break within her breast and the bleeding, inward tears race through her like acid.

Her boy. Her darling. The thing she loved better than anything else in the world. Ah, but did she?

They didn't even know she knew him. What would everyone say? The stately Laurine Johnstone, Gregg Austin, the man

Cosmopolitan for May, 1923

she meant perhaps to marry some day. Gregg, with his amused sneer.

They were sorry about it—as they would be sorry for a dog run over in the street.

They didn't know this was the heart of her heart.

If she went, everything was over. Her poor, weak little hand was on the table for the world to laugh at. Before all these people. The reporters. The faces she knew.

She could not leave her seat.

Perhaps he wasn't really hurt. Of course he wasn't.

But—this had to end. These were death pangs, rending her. She couldn't stand it. Gwynne Gunning's big moment had come.

And suddenly she stood up, before all those staring eyes.

She saw the ghastly, empty stretcher coming down the aisle.

Like the swift flight of a bird, she was in the aisle. Tried to climb into the ring.

The swathing folds of thousands of dollars' worth of chinchilla caught and tripped her.

With a superb gesture she tore off the cloak and dropped it in the dirt.

No one who was there ever forgot it.

The strain had been so horrible.

Then, there under the electric lights, was a beautiful, exquisite young thing, in an amazing gown, who pushed aside everyone and kneeling down took the boy's quiet, splendid young head in her arms.

"Joe," she said very softly, and tried to smile at him, "Joe, it's your little mama. Don't be afraid."

And kissed him before them all.

V

THE flicker on the silversheet ceased. The lights in the small studio projection room went up. But the silence held.

The men and women who sat there, the final judgment committee of the greatest studio in the world, stared at each other wordless.

Tears were on their faces. The first tears the screen had drawn from them in years.

It was the fat little president who spoke first. The man whose word rocked the entire industry.

"That," he said slowly, "is the finest piece of acting I ever have seen on the screen."

"That isn't acting," said the gray-haired woman who ran with amazing efficiency the biggest scénario department in the game, "that's just real feeling. I can't believe it. What's happened to her?"

"No, it don't seem possible," said the president, wiping unashamed the tears from his fat cheeks, "that that's Gwynne Gunning. And I always put her down as beautiful and dumb and not understanding anything about real things. Poor little kid. Poor little kid. If she keeps that up she'll be a great artist. What's done it to her? I want to tell her."

"She slipped out a moment ago," said her director quietly.

"I want to tell her," repeated the president.

But Gwynne Gunning was sitting very quietly in her dressing room.

Her cheek was pressed softly against a little old blue shirt. And she was gazing

Queen Anne or Mary Ann

A Queen Anne front and a Mary Ann back—that's the way a house built all for show is described. To the street it puts up a handsome front—fresh, white paint and smooth green lawns.

Go around to the back, and you get another story.

There are many Queen Anne Towns—

the main business and residence streets are clean and shining. Well-kept parks and squares are show places. But go around to the back streets—to the alleys, to the vacant lots—and you get another story. Rubbish heaps, tin cans, refuse, dirty stables and stagnant water are breeding places for disease carriers.

A town can be clean—

only as its back streets are clean. The disease bred in dirty places is ever a menace to the big house on the hill. So however clean the street and however good your neighborhood, you cannot protect your family from malaria, typhoid fever, tuberculosis, spinal meningitis, hook worm, and other germ diseases except by making the back of your town as clean and sanitary as its front.

As a City Father—

don't stop with having dirt and danger removed from one spot to another. That is not *cleaning-up*. That is only *stirring-up*. You should see that rubbish and germ-breeding material are not only collected from every spot in the town

but that they are burned—destroyed forever.

For germs travel—

some in water; some in milk; some by air; thousands use the common house fly as an airship. Others hop with the flea. Some of the most dangerous come with the sting of a mosquito, while your ten fingers are the favorite transport of many, many thousands from anywhere and everywhere direct to your mouth.

The Three FFF's

"The three F's in the transfer of disease are *Flies*, *Food* and *Fingers*," says a leading sanitarian. He considers a knowledge of the three F's more important than the old curriculum of three R's.

Flies—The common house fly—bred in filth—carries on its legs thousands of germs. The fly lights on your baby—leaving its deadly germs. It gets into milk—poisoning it.

Food—Food handled by unclean hands; food exposed to dirt and flies, becomes contaminated, and may plant the germs of disease directly in the human system.

Fingers—The fingers collect germs and dirt from stair rails, from car straps, from shoes, rubbers, from ordinary objects in every day use. And the fingers are constantly making trips to the mouth.

Stamp out disease—

by cleaning-up dirt and filth where disease germs breed.

Be one in your town to start a great town-cleaning drive this Spring. Get your neighbors interested in making your town a safe place in which to live. Help to teach those in the careless house the value of sanitation.

Every City Mother should remember—

that the snow-white house and nursery she provides for her baby, may be made dangerous by the dirt from the unclean places. Unless all of a community is clean, no part of it can be entirely safe.

Start the war on dirt today with the world's greatest weapons against disease—*Fire, Soap, Water* and *Vigor*.

Figures show that wherever the Sanitarian holds sway, disease has been lessened, the death rate cut down, and the average life lengthened.

In the interests of its policyholders the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company wages perpetual warfare upon the carriers and breeding places of disease germs. In 1922 it conducted 440 Community Clean-Up Campaigns.

The 17,000 Agents of the Metro-

politan are 17,000 Champions of Community Cleanliness and Sanitation. Health Boards and civic bodies everywhere are calling on them for help in carrying on Clean-Up Days and Clean-Up Weeks.

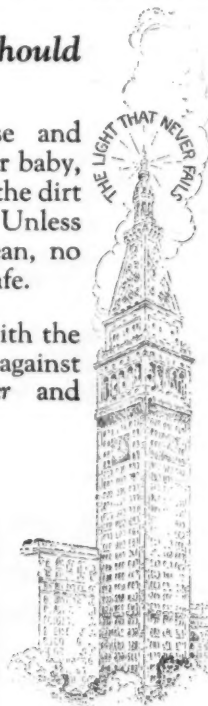
Have a great Spring Cleaning in Your Town, too! Let the Metropolitan Agents in their daily round of visits to the homes of policyholders, help you to enlist your householders in the Campaign.

Don't wait to swat the fly—stamp

out her breeding places. Keep highways and byways clean. Build a big Spring bonfire. Let it spread until the dirt from every corner is burned—not just moved from your premises to somewhere else.

Ask the Metropolitan Agent how to do your part. He will be glad to help you. The Company will be glad to send "Clean-Up" literature to public agencies, to town authorities and to householders.

HALEY FISKE, President

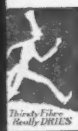


Published by

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See it at your dealer's

ScotTissue Towels

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Cosmopolitan for May, 1923

with closed eyes into the face of the man who had taught her that truth is the only thing that bears fruit.

The boy who had crept into her heart through the doorway of her passion and led her through blood and tears and agony and shame into the great company of poets and lovers.

The boy who so unwittingly, and at so great a price, had called her bluff.

And little Gwynne Gunning never put on her chinchilla cloak again.

One of the most poignant stories ever told is by Adela Rogers St. Johns in COSMOPOLITAN for June.

The Guests of Honor

(Continued from page 35)

house—he'd have to rebuild anyway." Mr. Tautphaus pursed his lips and looked thoughtful.

"You see, it just juts into both the Lee and the Lessing places," pursued Juliana shrewdly.

"Now I'll tell you what I'd do," said the agent, with an air of impartial frankness. "I'd put a price on it, twenty thousand dollars. I'd do that. You authorize me to act for you, at that price, and let me see what I can do."

"But good gracious, he could buy any place—for that! No," said Juliana flatly, "I won't do it. You can tell him so!"

And she left the little agent abruptly, in his shiny little car, and went back to Dan in the garden. Dan, with Alexander Joy Rutherford, ravishing in a tight, faded pink romper, staggering beside him, was off to the Whites' to borrow a card table.

But when Dan came back that was another thorn, too. For the Whites' card table had been broken by having the children stand on it, and innocent Dan had wandered on to the Lessings' and had actually asked Mrs. Lessing if he might have hers.

Juliana's face burned.

"Dan, you didn't!"

"Yes I did. Why not? I knew they must have 'em—piles of 'em. She was having her hair done or something, I suppose, because she just sent out word that she would send one down. I said to the butler I'd take it, but he said no, a man would bring it down."

Juliana sat down on a porch step, her mouth hard, her eyes absent. She visualized the scene: the great lady interrupted at her toilet, the surprised moment on the part of mistress and maid before she sent out her message.

"Dan," began Juliana, "if you only—"

"—were a gentleman!" was to be the ending. But she did not say it. A dreariness of spirit fell upon her, and later when she learned from the abashed Dan that the card table had come and that Dan had bashfully attempted to give the chauffeur fifty cents as a tip and had been repulsed firmly but civilly, she merely sighed and shrugged.

She remembered, as she fussed and tasted and polished, that when she had married Dan everyone had said—or at least mama had—Phrases like "rough diamond" and "not Juliana's type" floated



Her Ideal Car—Our Ideal Paige

SHE knows little—nor need she—of the lifetime care and conscience engineers have dedicated to the nice simplicities of mechanism about her. Enough that all her motoring whims are gratified—that every comfort serves and surrounds her.

She is proud of her ideal Paige as it stands at her door—delighted by its beauty and substantial character. She is secure in her knowledge that no squeaks or rattles will ever call for apology. In any society its manners bespeak its quality.

Under the hood an ideally quiet seventy-horsepower motor meets every situation, summoned by dainty touch of toe. Through traffic thickets at a two-mile crawl, or over the rolling road at seventy or more—match her thrill, if you can, with any truer mastery of motion!

Delightful above all things is her ideal Paige's ease of handling. Here is finger-touch gear shifting with a bare three-inch movement.

No need to pause, or to hurry—thanks to the wonderful Paige non-spin clutch. And so gentle the clutch action, she never "jerks" the car nor "stalls" the motor, however inexperienced. With ball-bearing steering spindles, steering becomes easy to the frailest hand.

Against the sudden onslaught of rain or snow, the automatic windshield-wiper preserves her clear vision ahead. The backward panorama of the road and its traffic changes are duplicated in the rear-view mirror; and when her dainty foot presses the brake, a red light warns those behind to greater caution.

Still more comforts for mind and body! A gasoline gauge on the dash warns of approaching need, a Waltham clock of fleeting time. A green glass visor protects view and softens glare. Electric cigarette lighter laughs at forgotten matches. Squeak-proof body construction soothes tired nerves. And rear springs more than 5 feet long, with snubbers, cushion even thought of rough roads.

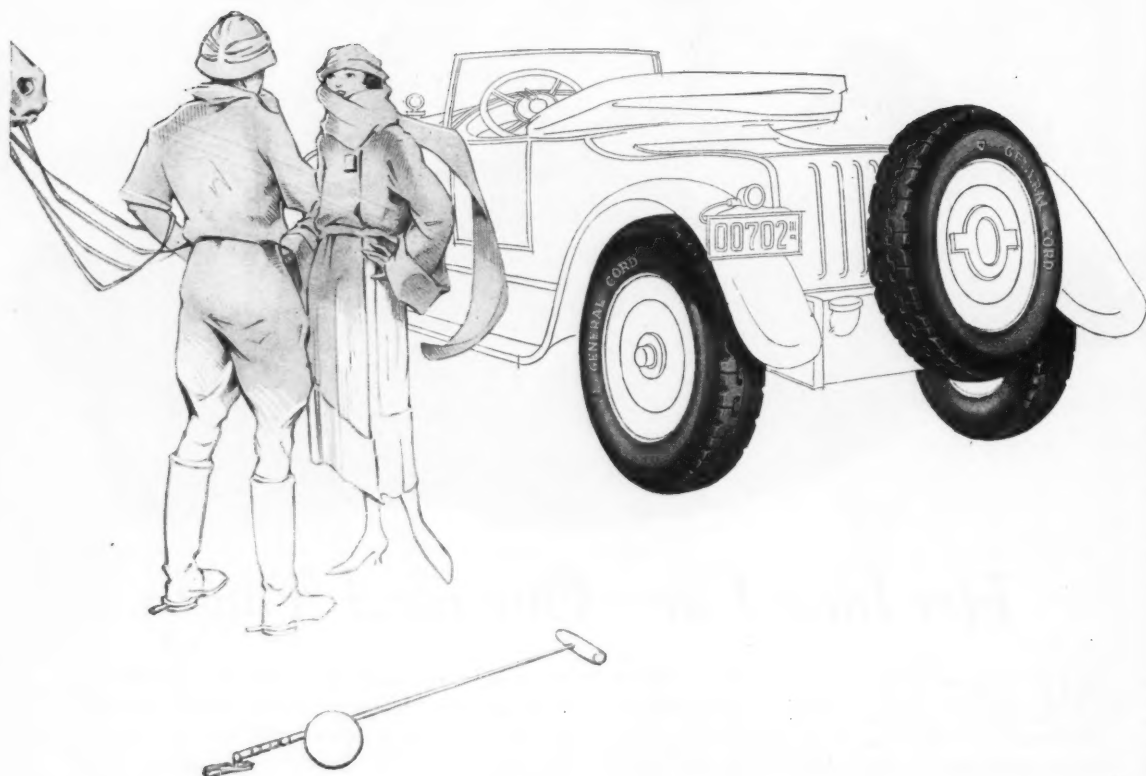
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—goes a long way
to make friends

THE GENERAL CORD TIRE

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sedition through her mind. Now here she was, struggling to meet persons of her own type on their own ground—and Dan—

The happy little house was full of friction and agitation and misunderstanding today. Nothing went right, and the day was a long nightmare to Juliana. The baby got sleepy at six o'clock, a bad sign, for it might mean that he would be wakeful later on. Katie, engaged to assist Lizzie, arrived in a pale blue crêpe de Chine waist, with hair obviously marcelled. Juliana had indicated to her, as boldly as she dared, that she would like her waitress to wear plain black tonight, but she dared not reproach the independent Katie, who was ticklish material from which to concoct a servant, at best. Lizzie waved a stout, freckled hand at the biscuits, when Juliana, deliciously pretty in her white gown, went anxiously out for a last inspection of the kitchen at quarter to eight.

"Biscuits or rocks, I done what she told me," said Lizzie. "If that's what they like to eat, well and good. I had some tea and toast an hour ago, and it feels to me like the middle of the night. I always thought curry was what you done with what was left, like you might make a hash—"

"Delicious—delicious!" murmured Juliana, tasting and stirring. She flitted away—candlelight on the marigolds—that was lovely, and so sweet a spring twilight outside that she would not draw the shades. And here was the first limousine's big eye, gleaming in the opal dusk, at the gate. Both the Lees—that was delightful! She had been so afraid Mr. Lee couldn't come.

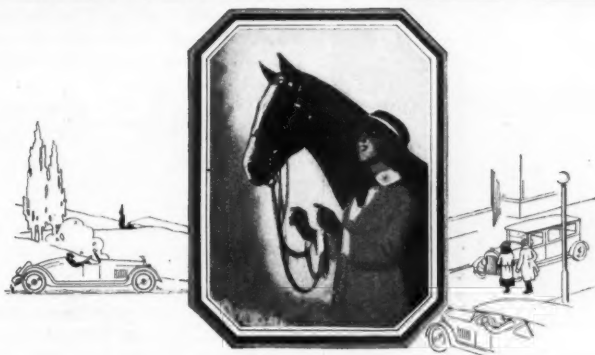
And the Lessings, close upon them. She didn't quite like the fact that both men guests asked Dan to show them the place and walked about the fruitful, ordered two acres interestedly before dinner, but she took the women guests gallantly upstairs, hearing murmurs from the girls' room but hoping that the visiting ladies did not. Mrs. Cruikshank gaily and talkatively made her own way up a moment later, and the four women chatted in the speckless spare room.

What a dear little house it was, and what a good baby she must have to go to sleep so early! they said. Ah, well, they thought he was pretty sweet, Juliana smiled. It was awkward to have Mrs. Lessing—the oldest, the most conservative of the group—open the door of the awful hall closet, thinking it was the way downstairs; it was hideous to have the children's toys and play sweaters and various miscellaneous matters come cascading out. Juliana's face flushed as she jammed them back and forced the door closed again.

"How shall you manage your children's schooling when they are a little older?" Ross Lessing asked her as he shook out his napkin, and that was disquieting, too. He wasn't interested in her children's schooling! Juliana's suspicion that he was the "party" of the real estate proposition deepened.

There was a long wait after the soup. Dan talked on gallantly, but not as he would have talked to the Babcocks or the shabby Pattersons, for example, had they brought their wild, disheveled children down for a meal with the Rutherfords. He told them about the Indian village that had once stood on this spot, and of

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the mysterious bricks that the Indians must have made—very unusual, nobody quite understood it.

His guests listened, Mrs. Lessing—Juliana noted—not touching her soup; and then Dunham Lee said in a low tone to Ross Lessing, "Funny thing about those Swedish bonds, eh?" and for a few minutes they all talked international loans and bond issues.

Five minutes—ten minutes. It was frightful, but Juliana had to excuse herself and go out and investigate the kitchen for herself. She murmured the maids' names sharply as she crossed the pantry. "Katie—I rang twice!"

"I never heard you," Katie said, all bustle, coming in from the porch.

"Go get the plates. Haven't you got that rice in the mold yet, Lizzie? Here, let me show you—go straight up to bed again, dear, and don't make any noise!" said Juliana to her first-born, who now appeared before her, like a wraith in brief pajamas.

Barbe bore blanching news.

"Grammer's here!" she said, electrically.

Juliana felt her heart plunge; stop short.

"Grandma? How do you know?"

"Me and Mary Ann were looking out from the sleeping porch," announced Barbe, "and we saw the taxi."

Juliana sat down. "Well, she'll simply have to keep out of sight—I simply won't—I can't—she'll just spoil everything!" ran her desperate thoughts. Aloud she said, "Slip round to the garden, Lizzie, and ask Mrs. Rutherford to come in this way, will you?"

Too late, Katie returned with eight soup plates—piled!—and the news that Mrs. Rutherford was in the dining room, and Mr. Rutherford wanted there should be another place set.

With a feeling almost murderous Juliana returned, brightly smiling, to her guests, and kissed her mother-in-law, whom indeed, until this moment, she had always loved. Dan had his arm about his mother, his face was bright with surprise and pleasure, the introductions were just completed.

Mrs. Rutherford was handsome, rosy, reaching sixty. She belonged to the new order of middle-age, the order of balanced menus and calories and civic clubs; she had been an honored delegate at more than one national convention. Her suit was plain, her soft old throat showed above a frill of rather good imitation lace filet, but her hat was unfortunate.

"You poor girl, you, why didn't you write me you were having a party?" she said, with all Dan's serenity. "I guess I'm the mother-in-law of the comics, after this. I've been trying to phone you all day—or at least I did this morning, before I left home. Your father and I saw a real good film about a mother-in-law last week, Daniel," she said to her son. "We have the best, you know, at the new Royal. Oh, that is a beautiful theater, Julie, I just want you and Dan to see it! I said to Mr. Rutherford, 'Well, maybe that'll take some of the curse off!' I knew you and Dan wanted to get away in the car for a few days," resumed Mrs. Rutherford, "and I hadn't anything to do this week—they're papering the upstairs—so I sent your father over to Lou's, and I came down. I'm having a tooth crowned," she

explained to Ross Lessing. "It's such a bother I wish now I'd let him take it out. It brings me to the city—"

"No curry?" said Juliana to Mrs. Lessing in dismay. And with a hot and cold thrill she remembered that her most honored guest was a Catholic. Misery engulfed her. What did one do? Offer eggs?

She risked it. Mrs. Lessing smiled reassuringly. No, she had had tea. No, truly. Besides, there was this, she said pleasantly, holding up her salad fork. Just a plain little salad, Juliana said. But she liked Mrs. Lessing, kindly fussing with fried bananas and spinach and rice and chutney. "I've had a big dinner, for me, and everything so delicious!" said Mrs. Lessing.

"Da-ad!" It was a wail, distinguishable as Mary Ann's. It was followed by a banging door, by silence. To the uninitiated it sounded like battle, murder and sudden death, and silence fell upon the dinner party. But Juliana and Dan exchanged only a tentative, inquiring glance. Was it worth notice? Had she gone off to sleep again, or perhaps not entirely awakened at all?

"I'll go up," said Dan's mother.

But the bare feet of Mary Ann had been approaching them unheard all this time, and now Mary Ann burst in, sobbing, in outgrown pajamas whose cuffs Dan had split that very evening so that they should not chafe her, and with a button missing at the neck. Her fair hair was in disorder and she was crying.

"Dad, I had a bad dream," she sobbed, "and you didn't—you didn't hear me!"

"My little sweetheart!" Her father had her in his arms; weeping, pale, straight of hair and missing of tooth, she was welcome there. He was conscious of no onlooking eyes as he dried her tears and held her close and cuddled her bare little feet. "No slippers, pussy?" he said.

Mary Ann sniffled, heaved a deep sigh, gulped and was content. She snuggled in her father's arms, she smiled wetly upon the company. And Katie said blithely "All right!" when Juliana asked her for more coffee.

The company left the table at about half-past nine, and the house only three-quarters of an hour later. They had pleasantly convincing reasons for so doing; Mr. Lee was extremely tired, Mr. Lessing was making an early start for Boston the next day, Mrs. Cruikshank had promised to look in at the theatricals of the Barnhill Country Club at ten o'clock.

The card tables, therefore, were not used, nor the new packs, nor the sharpened pencils. Mrs. Lessing suggested that they might take the table back, they had the car right here at the gate.

"Oh, we'll send it—!" Juliana, flushed but gallant to the end, corrected herself. "We'll bring it back," she said.

Well, perhaps it would be better if the Lessings took it along with them, it appeared. You see, there was to be a card party for the Babies' Hospital tomorrow, at Barnhill, and they had asked for card tables. Mrs. Lessing had gathered up eleven this afternoon and sent them over, and she would—

So they took the card table and all went away, Juliana walking out to the gate with the Lees, the last to depart, under a mellow spring moon.

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which has made the service possible. Then there are the people who produce the raw materials, the supplies and manufactured articles required for telephone service.

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After they had gone she remained at the gate, leaning upon its old-fashioned pickets, her white gown a glimmer in the soft light between the blossoming lilacs and the little Japanese maple. Dan, straightening the sitting room, carrying the chairs about and "smallening" the table, sent her more than one uneasy glance.

"I guess I queered poor Ju's dinner party," he said repentantly to his mother.

Mrs. Rutherford, holding the now sleeping Mary Ann in her arms, looked surprised.

"How?" she asked. "I tasted everything—I'd had my dinner—but it seemed perfectly delicious to me, and I thought Katie did real well."

"Those people don't go to dinners to eat," Dan said dismally.

He carried his daughter upstairs, and Mrs. Rutherford took possession of the spare room, with its unaccustomed candles, powder and embroidered towels.

"Ju's out at the gate," she told her son. "You go out there and make your peace with her. You tell her that I was tired and went to bed, and if I'm still reading when you come up tell her to put her head in here and say good night. Maybe I kind of complicated, Daniel," his mother added, kissing him. "But I knew you folks wanted to get up into mountain country for a few days, to Will's, and I thought you could leave the baby, and Mary Ann too, here with Lizzie and me—you and Julie always seem to entertain so easily and not to mind who comes in—"

"You never complicated anything, darling!" Dan said affectionately. But his heart was rather low as he went out into the flooding moonlight to find his wife.

It gave a leap of relief and astonishment when she turned shining eyes upon him in the soft gloom.

"Dan, was there ever such a night?" she said dreamily.

"Somebody——" He hardly dared venture it, but then, with the high moon shining, and the lilacs drenched with sweetness, and the black shadows lying like lacework on the little lawn, it was easy to put his big arm about her, easy to venture anything. "Somebody ought to be playing 'The Chocolate Soldier,'" he said.

She rested her dark head on his shoulder; the whole sweet, fragrant, lovely woman, in her frail white ruffles, was in his arms.

"Dan, wasn't it horrible?" she said slowly, but without any special regret in her voice. "You know, most dinners—when you think of them, out here under the stars, as microbes doing things in a world of microbes—are nonsense, aren't they?" she went on. "Those people didn't want our food; their houses were full of better food. They could have gone to twenty hotels in the city and bought better. They didn't want to come, they just balanced the pros and cons and felt that they ought to come. And I acted like a—like a—dumbbell!"

"I was a dog," said Dan simply.

"You have no social brains," his wife told him, in a tone of mere dispassionate resignation. "And when it comes to superficialities, I can trust the baby's instincts before yours!" She turned suddenly and kissed him, with that little soft



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rush of fragrant hair and that quick surrender of arms and lips that always intoxicated him. "But I love you, Dan!" she said.

"I love you, my own girl," Dan answered, suddenly husky. "But I don't deserve to have you nice to me tonight. You struggled and you worked—and you were eager and busy and interested—and then, like boobs, the kids and I, and Lizzie and Katie, and even mother, mixed up the whole party! But never mind, Ju," he added, "some day we'll try it again. They shan't freeze you out of your little farmhouse, and next time it'll all go right—you'll see!"

"Never again!" Juliana said, smiling. "I'm going to give the house to Tautphaus tomorrow," she added calmly, "and I'm going to get my own price for it, too! And we'll cruise about and go somewhere else! Not because"—she interrupted his protest quickly—"not because they don't like us—but because I don't like *them*! I don't like what they'll make of me if I don't run to cover!"

"Ah, darling, but you love—we love this place!" Dan said, quite overcome by the utter unexpectedness of this mood.

"Yes, and that's just the trouble!" his wife answered, laughing, yet in earnest too. "They love their places, and to have maids in caps and aprons, and meals served like religious ceremonies, and a garage and a tennis court rounding out the estate, instead of the Rutherfords'

house! It's all the better, Dan—it kills the spirit! I don't want to get like that. I don't want to have a chill when Katie says 'All right!' or passes food on the right side instead of the left. I don't want," said little Juliana, her hands on his shoulders now, and her white-ruffled figure close to him in the moonlight, "I don't ever want to have a dinner to which my husband's mother isn't welcome," she said, "or to which my Mary Ann, in her little nightgown, can't come down, to be loved and comforted! They're my guests of honor!"

Dan was silent for a long minute, but their eyes, as he held her tight, did not move from each other. Presently the man said slowly:

"You're the most wonder—but I'm not fooling. You are the most wonderful woman in the world!"

They turned from the gate. The shabby little house looked peaceful, under its overarching elms, with a mellow square of light showing Mrs. Rutherford's window. Behind Juliana and Dan, as they went slowly up the path with their arms locked, lights shone from the stately Lessing house, and in the servants' rooms at the Lee mansion, and in the garages. And presently the Cruikshank limousine swept by; Mrs. Cruikshank had changed her gown and she and her escort were on their way to the country club.

But Juliana and Dan saw none of this. They had turned their backs upon it.

A "homey" story that will live in your memory begins Kathleen Norris's new Irish series in next month's COSMOPOLITAN

Zanzibar

(Continued from page 73)

tang of cloves, because it was still new to me and had a curious effect upon my emotions. Strange cries and sounds rang on the warm air like a pleasant symphony of tropic life. The warmth seemed to pulsate with human emotions. The dark shops glowed with romantic suggestions.

As we entered the counting room of Ali Beder, the old merchant had just paused on the threshold of an inner compartment to look back at us.

He was a patriarchal figure with a long stained beard, a goat-like face and a high domed forehead which disappeared under a small turban of black cloth embroidered with tarnished gold thread, twisted somewhat in the Persian style. A flowing *kanza* hung from his shoulders, enveloping him; but, old though he was, it could not disguise the great depth of chest and breadth of shoulder. There was something almost sinister in the suggestion of power, physical and mental, masked by age and the patriarchal garments.

"Hodie!" said Prescott cheerfully. "How are you?"

In the gloomy interior the old man's eyes had the appearance of being rimmed with red lids. They stared fixedly at the nonchalant Christian, until, recognizing him, they blazed curiously, then faded into the dull mask again. A slow weary smile drifted across the heavy countenance. The patriarch beckoned with a friendly gesture to the inner room.

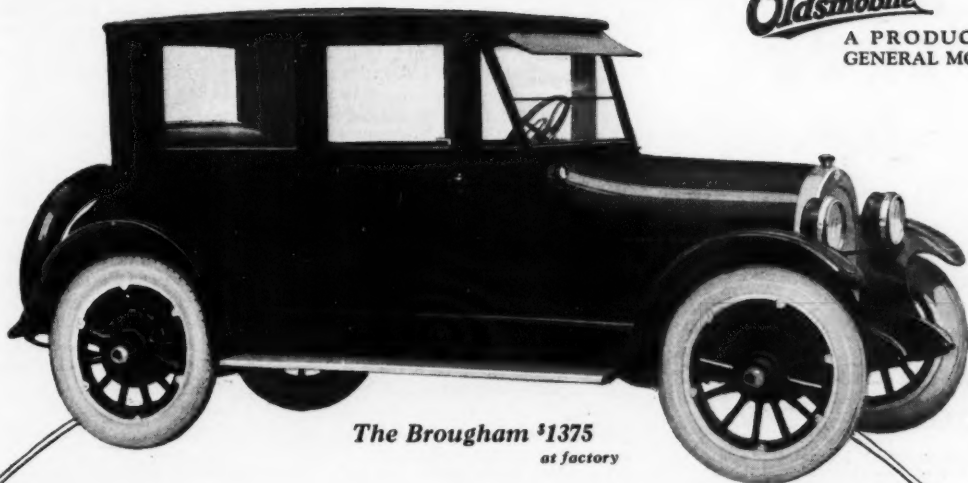
"Salaam," he responded cordially. "Come in."

Within the inner room, the old merchant treated us with hospitality and distinction. He made seats for us on mellowed Serabend rugs, bolstered with pillows. Clapping his hands, he called servants who brought narghiles charged with fragrant tobacco; black coffee, flavored with cardamom; sweet cakes made in his own kitchen; all served on etched brass trays from Damascus. This hospitality was particularly significant because it was the season of Ramadan when the Mohammedans themselves fasted throughout the day.

Ali Beder's long, almost lugubrious countenance, the moist, slightly pouting underlip, the watery, pink-edged eyes over which the heavy eyelids appeared to droop languidly, the wavering, kindly smile—all indicated a friendly, almost benign nature, and a somewhat simple intellect. As I observed him more carefully, however, looking through the fumes arising from my coffee cup, my first impression of something sinister beneath that exterior was strengthened. Sensuality was there, with a crushing implacable force, and the superstition of a treacherous nature.

At the same time his attitude towards Prescott was one of genuine friendliness; but it was a peculiar sort of friendliness—the half contemptuous, somewhat pitying tolerance of a perverted character which finds amusement in the companionship of

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one it has wronged. It occurred to me that Ali Beder was looking down on us from an age of adventurous and fearless men. There was no doubt that young Prescott recalled to him old and pleasant memories; while at the same time the young man's unimaginative listless personality appeared to him in contemptible contrast with the flame and vigor of the granduncle, Ibrahim Effendi.

I tried unsuccessfully to draw old Ali Beder out. He spoke freely of Tippoo Tib, whom his father had financed; he had met Henry Stanley, and thought little of him; while he had a genuine admiration for David Livingstone. But when I mentioned Ibrahim Effendi, he dismissed him blandly. I brought up the subject a second time. Ali Beder, looking at me queerly, gave an almost imperceptible shrug, and murmured: "Bassi!"

I took the hint and said no more.

Leaving the counting room, Prescott and I went on to the godown to which Abu Nawass had already preceded us, to commence the weighing of the cloves Briggs had purchased.

There is a tremendous fascination about cloves in bulk, and here in Ali Beder's godown was a veritable hill of them. They were piled twenty feet high on the floor of a gloomy chamber into which light filtered dimly through iron-barred windows, touching with high lights the black and bronze skin of the hamals, scrambling, plunging and sliding knee-deep in the spice. Glimpses of the glaring blue sea were framed in the casements; the noises of the bazaar and bay were hushed by the thick cement walls; and an atmosphere of romance saturated the ancient edifice.

The cavernous depths of the godown with the black workers flitting back and forth like shadows, chanting as they tossed the spice, seemed to me like one of the subterranean corridors which Irving wrote about in his legends of Alhambra. I wanted to explore deeper into the most remote chambers; but Prescott was bored and indifferent. Sitting on a bale in a dark corner he wanted to talk market prices with Abu Nawass.

At last I persuaded him to come with me. We found nothing new. The inner rooms were simply a series of square cell-like chambers packed to the ceiling with cloves baled in *makanda* mats and ventilated by means of tiny grated windows. As we penetrated deeper the silence and darkness became oppressive. Still we continued on, until, rounding a dark corner, we became separated. I waited for a moment indecisively, expecting to hear Prescott crunching the crisp cloves under foot, but at first I heard nothing. All at once I distinguished very faintly the sound of water tinkling in a metal basin.

It was a pleasant sound, and I moved quietly towards it, forcing a passage between the bales, until I came unexpectedly upon an iron-grilled door. This door was obviously all that separated Ali Beder's godown from his living quarters. Built at a time when fighting and sudden flight were not unlikely contingencies, it was probably originally intended as a means of escape through the godown to the waterfront. It was apparently no longer used.

Prescott was standing tight against this door, pressing himself against the iron bars, fascinated by something within.

Without advancing farther all I could see was an enclosed courtyard around which ran a latticed balcony. Only an obscure corner of the court and stairs was visible to me. In this corner there was a curbed cistern from which water was splashed upon the black and white checkered flags where pigeons were strutting and ruffling their wings. Brass and pewter trays and long-necked water pitchers were scattered about as though someone had been scouring and refilling them with water. A couple of pomegranates, pink and yellow with fruit, stood near the door in jars, screening the rest of the court from observation.

A young white goat with head twisted on one side was standing with its fore hoofs on the cistern curb looking with a ludicrous expression into its black dermis. In the distance I could hear voices—women's voices, speaking and laughing in Arabic and Kiswahili. My heart began pounding with excitement, for I realized instantly that we had accidentally blundered into the heart of the women's quarters of a wealthy Arab's *beyt*! A big negress, laughing merrily, walked across the court, her bare feet flip-flopping on the wet flags, splashing water slovenly from the buckets she carried.

Then I heard a gurgle of laughter from beside the door, but just out of sight, and I caught my breath. The next instant a pomegranate was thrown across the cistern, and burst upon the forehead of the dazed goat. The startled animal shied off backwards on its hind legs; and at the same instant a girl stepped into view, laughing uncontrollably, bending forward slapping her knees and calling the goat ridiculous names in pure Arabic.

For a moment I was dazed with astonishment. I thought confusedly that we had discovered a beautiful European girl held prisoner in this impenetrable *beyt*; but her fluent gutturals instantly undeceived me. It was simply that I saw for the first time a very beautiful type of pure Arab, unveiled, and moving about with graceful abandon. Nevertheless, she was beyond comparison the most exquisite creature I had seen in years.

Slim and strong, ardent and young, with the brown expressive eyes of a race which puts high value on the power of the eye, she seemed formed for swift and graceful movement. Her olive skin was flushed with color. Her slippers had been kicked aside and her white dainty feet were bare; while her sleeves, rolled up to the elbow, disclosed white graceful forearms. The fun of playing with the cool water had evidently made the task of polishing the metal a pleasant one.

With bent body she pattered her feet as she danced before the goat; clapped her hands; and, when her thick braids of glossy hair fell over her shoulder, straightened up to toss them back with a movement that showed all the inviting grace of a firm young throat and the curves of her shoulders and bosom, half bared by the slipping blue silken gown she wore. She wore in addition striped trousers caught tight above her ankles, and her black hair was carelessly decorated with bits of blue ribbon and gold ornaments.

She was obviously a member of Ali Beder's own family.

So fascinated was I by the sight that I



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entirely forgot the presence of Prescott, who, equally forgetful of me, had not budged. The shame I might have felt at this sort of intrusion was drowned by an emotion I had never before experienced. This girl sparkled so with vitality, shone so with natural cleanliness, that she seemed utterly remote from the women to whom I had become accustomed. The European women of the colony were languorous, petulant and pale; the Indians, though exquisite of feature, seemed more or less dirty with their greasy ointments and pomades; while the blacks were savagely coarse and repellent. This girl, laughing aloud with natural expression, dancing, shuffling her feet, tossing her head, clapping her hands, glowing with color, was a fusion of all the passions and graces of her race. The first breath of love might destroy her in flame; but scorn would turn her into a murderous sibyl.

I could have reached out my hand and touched her. She was so near I could distinguish the shadows under her eyes, cast by her long lashes; hear the quick catch of her breath between bursts of laughter; see the warm blood palpitating in her throat; could even perceive the velvet texture of her skin, the moisture of her lip, her little tongue slipping in and out between glistening teeth, the gleam of her eyes as she opened them in mock terror at the prancing goat.

"Ah, stupid Nana," she gasped, "why didn't you dive in, then, when I threw it?"

The goat shook his yellow horns at her and waved his forelegs. The girl backed away, hands stretched at full length in front of her, fingers widespread.

"Coward!" she laughed. "Nana, you'll always look like a fool until you get the courage to attack. Boo! Na-na-na-na! Allah, to be afraid of a woman!"

All at once a curious change came over the girl. A look of uneasiness, of perplexity, slowly drove away the laughter. She straightened up, looking doubtfully about her, at the same time involuntarily drawing together the silken gown at her throat. I knew immediately what had happened. She felt our presence. Instantly my own tremulousness was gone, and I threw out my hand to draw Prescott away from the girl. At that moment he must have whispered to her, or else his foot crunched upon some clove; for the girl suddenly stumbled backward as though thrown off her balance.

Turning her head sharply in our direction, she discovered Prescott pressing against the bars, his face flushed with excitement, his clear blue eyes fixed upon her, his hair rumpled about his forehead by the toupee that had fallen from his head. With a smothered shriek she jumped away and flew up the stairs to the balcony, looking wildly over her shoulder, until she seized a shawl which she drew over her head, veiling her face.

The big negress came running noisily into the courtyard, followed by others, calling out:

"Safie! Sweetheart, what is the matter?"

I jerked Prescott back into the shadow, cursing under my breath at his awkwardness, knowing that we were in a damnable embarrassing and possibly serious situation. I caught a last glimpse of Safie, hesitating at the top of the stairway, her wide startled eyes filling with curiosity. All at once I heard her say, laughing

hysterically as the servants ran towards her: "It is nothing! Nana—Nana—that wicked goat—ran at me!"

"Oh, Lord," I could not help exclaiming, as I urged Prescott along the passageway, "you lucky devil!"

"What did she say?" he asked confusedly.

"Don't you understand Arabic?"

"Not a word!"

"You idiot," I exclaimed wildly, "why didn't you learn at least a few phrases?"

"What did she say?"

"Never mind," I said after a few minutes, when my judgment was a little calmer; "but remember this. We've just done something that a Mohammedan considers a serious offense against decency. If those women tell Ali Beder, there's bound to be trouble of some sort—I don't know just what. The only thing for us to do is to keep our mouths shut. Forget the whole thing!"

"I don't see it," said Prescott stubbornly. "I've acted pretty decently here in Zanzibar, and no one can say anything against me. Why can't I go to Ali Beder, explain the situation and ask him to introduce me?"

Exasperated, still somewhat agitated by my own emotions, I could only splutter: "You're not in Boston! If you even drop a hint of this to Ali Beder, you'll never see her again!"

After a moment he said explosively:

"Well, by God, I will see her again!"

We found Abu Nawass leaning against the wall like a figure from Lalla Rookh, frustrating with blunt sarcasm the efforts of Ali Beder's *karani* to cheat on the weight of the cloves.

"Look for yourself," he said with a contemptuous gesture. "Ali Beder must have a grudge against you. This stuff will have to go through three siftings!"

Prescott looked without interest, a far-away expression in his eyes, the muscles of his jaw working slightly; while I myself felt a mingling of misery and suffocation as I thought of Safie and the utter futility of my even hoping to see her again.

Fortunately for my own peace of mind I received a telegram that same afternoon urging me to go immediately to Dar-Es-Salaam, which is on the mainland across the way from Zanzibar, to see a man who was going inland to Ujiji. Through the influence of the O. O. A. I was given passage on one of the small British trawlers that patrol the coast; and the following morning I was on the mainland. I had a royal time in the navy, and managed through the good will of my new friends to get a lift back to Zanzibar in an aeroplane, which dropped me on the outskirts of the city the fourth evening after my departure.

I cleaned up at the hotel, dropped around to see the O. O. A., only to find him out, and ended up at Briggs's place.

The great Arab pile was as dark and imposing as on the first night I visited it. Old Mzee swung open the heavy carved door and stood aside, holding his yellow lantern overhead as I passed up the narrow stairway. Briggs was out; and I hesitated on the *barasa*, looking out across the calm waters of the roadstead. The sun had just gone down like a plummet into the blackness of Africa; the sea below me was turning from opal to



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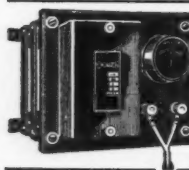
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shadowy purple, and the islands that dotted it from jade-green to velvet.

A peculiar hush lay over the city.

The season of Ramadan was ending. Each evening the mullahs had been watching for the thin sickle of the new moon to mark an end of the long fast and herald the feast that followed. A heat mist, like a veil, was drawn across the sky, and the watchers waited hopefully for it to pass.

I felt myself sinking into the calm of the moment, but beneath this mood I experienced a sort of pleasant tremulousness, as vague indefinable impulses stirred in my veins. The last four days had been crowded with so much action that now I could hardly compose myself. I felt an intense craving for swift movement; in short, I was in exactly the right mood for adventure. Standing there with arms folded, I waited impatiently for someone to come. All at once, acutely conscious, I swung quickly about and saw an Arab standing immovably in the shadows, watching me.

He had no right there, and I looked at him steadily, feeling the fingers of danger rippling up my spine. After a moment he made a gesture of impatience and stepped forward into the light. It was young Earl Prescott, wrapped in a dark cloak, with a turban pressed down on his head, its loose end muffling his mouth.

"Quick," he said in an uncertain voice; "step out of the light. I want to talk to you." I moved to the darker end of the barasa, without saying a word. "You're just in time," he said, gripping me by the arm and talking rapidly and vehemently. "You've got to help me. You've got to! You know—you're the only one who does know—except Abu Nawass—and I can trust you. Listen! For heaven's sake don't think I'm a fool. Just listen—because you've got to help me!"

"What are you talking about?" I said coldly; but my heart began to pound heavily.

"You know already! It's Safie—Ali Beder's granddaughter. We're in love! She's told me she loves me. As for me—oh, you don't understand! I love her, that's all! I'm crazy about her! I mean it. I never knew there was any feeling like it. If I don't get her," he said wildly, "I tell you there'll be trouble. If anybody tries to stop me, I'll kill him!"

"You dashed fool," said I. "Pull yourself together!"

"You don't understand!" he cried. "You can't understand. Listen. The day after you left, I went to that gate and saw her again—and she smiled at me—and gave me a bit of fruit—and whispered to me, but I couldn't understand her. Then I went back in the afternoon with a phrase book and saw her again, and I found out who she was. When she handed me another piece of fruit, I touched her hand. I can't explain it; but it was like electricity. I—I just went—blooey! I don't know now how I managed it, but I kissed her through the iron bars; and she ran away because someone was coming. The next day she was afraid to come close, and I couldn't explain in a whisper how I felt. Even if I spoke Arabic I think I would have choked. Look! When I talk of her I tremble all over. I know she loves me! I know it! And yet—there's that iron gate—and I can't explain alone—"

Cosmopolitan for May, 1923

"Explain what?"

"Explain just how I love her!"

I snorted, because I didn't trust myself to speak.

"I mean that. Oh, for God's sake, please don't jumble me up! I want you to understand! Yesterday Abu Nawass followed me, and he saw me talking to her. Well, I know I can depend upon Abu Nawass; so I told him the whole thing—"

I gave an involuntary exclamation.

"I told him the whole thing," he repeated in a tone of absolute anguish; "and he was straight! He—he helped me out. This morning he came with me and acted as my interpreter. The girl promised to meet me tonight—just after sunset—now! I was to bring keys to the godown locks and the inner gate—I had them made this morning—Abu Nawass knew a place. See, here they are! But Abu Nawass hasn't come! I—I've been waiting here almost an hour—with old Mzee hanging around watching me as if I'm crazy! Well, I am—pretty near it! About a quarter of an hour ago all at once I remembered what the O. O. A. told us about my granduncle—and—and treachery!"

As he paused to draw a strangling breath, jerking the turban fringe from in front of his mouth, an impassioned voice rose sonorously above the silent housetops:

"Ah, ma princess! Ma princess! Je t'adore! Ma princess!"

Prescott jerked his head nervously.

"Oh, shut up!" he muttered with irritation. Then he gave a short, dry laugh. "I understand that poor devil better, anyway," he said. "Romance is the search for love, isn't it? While love is—oh, there's nothing at all like it. Love is love! If I miss it—if I miss it now, I don't care what happens! Don't tell me about success—or my future! These people who measure success by the amount of dollars they make are fools! If you haven't got love, you might as well be dead!"

Suddenly Prescott put his hands on my shoulder. His voice was breaking.

"Bwana," he said, "help me! I'm afraid. Suppose Abu Nawass doesn't turn up?"

A flame swept over me. I forgot my own future. I forgot everything I risked. I forgot that ruin faced me if we were caught. Swept by the breath of sheer romance, I flung myself headlong into the adventure.

"Only one thing," I said, preserving my steadiness with an effort; "if she comes with you, what do you intend to do?"

"Do? Why, get some missionary to marry us—then take her away—anywhere—"

"All right," said I, "I'm with you. The O. O. A., as acting consul, can marry you. The Tabora is ready to sail for Durban; you can get away on her. Anyway, once you're married the rest is easy. Mzee!" I yelled.

Mzee came shuffling rapidly. His heavy drooping face was lighted by a strange expression of expectancy; his aged eyes had a look of shrewdness in them. I told him to bring me a *kansa*, a jacket, and a *tarboosh*; and as he shuffled away with a jerking sort of run I pushed Prescott into his room for a paper and pencil and wrote a note to the O. O. A. which no man of feeling could ignore. By the time I had

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finished this, Mzee had returned with a bundle. He laid this on the table and dropping on his knees began to unlace my boots. He had brought sandals.

"Good old Mzee," said I, feeling a species of gay intoxication at the prospect before us, "you know the game."

I slipped on the *kansa* with the jacket over it, having first discarded my tunic. For my head the *tarboosh* was sufficient, since my complexion is swarthy and my eyes brown. With my bare feet thrust into sandals, I looked an Arab.

Prescott, robbed of words by his mingled anguish and impatience, stood biting his nails and fumbling with his turban; but Mzee, as I stood up, squatted back on his haunches and chuckled.

"Take this letter," I said, "to the American *burra sahib*—'Bwana Oh-Oh-Ay.'" In a harsh voice I added: "If you do not find him, there will be great trouble."

"Master," said Mzee, scrambling to his feet and shuffling towards the stairway, "I understand."

As I jerked the sash off the table to wrap round my waist, a keen-edged, curved *jambeer* fell out. Somehow it called to my mind the fact that Mzee was the oldest retainer of the house. He had been a servant of Ibrahim Effendi!

"For heaven's sake," burst forth from Prescott's lips, "please hurry!"

As we slipped down the dark alleyway that led to the door of Ali Beder's outer godown by the waterfront, the city was still silent, the mullahs still hopefully looking upward as the mist began to dissolve.

We entered the outer godown without difficulty, the alley leading to it being deserted at night, though forty paces away it entered a crowded bazaar, while the other end led into the water. Ali Beder's fortress-like buildings towered above it on one side, while similar godowns pressed in upon it from the other. As we slid into the velvet blackness of the interior, half suffocated by the oppressive heavily spiced atmosphere, my nerves were acutely sensitive.

Taking one end of my sash, Prescott, who had studied the way, led along a tortuous passage, while I followed with hands outstretched, hardly daring to breathe, with the blood thumping in my ears. Very faintly we could hear people stirring in the house above and beyond us. The sound of waves lapping against the coral foundation of the godown and the harsh rasp of an anchor chain out in the roadstead, came to us through the softness of the night. Our own sandaled feet, which we tried to shuffle silently, occasionally crunched upon the littered cloves with a sound that made the hair tingle on my scalp.

Once I felt the strange impression that someone was near us. Touching Prescott's wrist, I stopped him while we listened. We could hear the *tap-tap-tap* of a beetle in the beams overhead, and then, suddenly, the hiss and whisper of a rivulet of cloves sliding to the floor and a scurrying of rats over the *makanda* mats.

By this time my gaiety was gone. I was soaked in perspiration; and I felt weak. Young Prescott had his love to stimulate him; his determination was unshakable. On the other hand, there was no reward for me; and as I recalled old Ali Beder's goat-like face and blazing eyes, and thought of



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the result of failure, I wanted very much to jerk my sash from Prescott's hands and run. As we advanced deeper into the blackness, the uneasiness in my stomach increased, until at last we saw a dim light and came upon the barred door.

It framed a dim scene like a Bakst setting for a gloomy drama. Vague figures moved behind the lattice of the veranda above. A lantern flickered near the well, lighting with yellow touches the metal pitchers and basins that were to be used at the evening meal. There was no sign of Safie. Breathing heavily, Prescott immediately started to fumble awkwardly at the lock with his key.

"Wait a minute," I whispered. "Cool down a bit, and let's get our bearings!"

Prescott looked at me with an insane expression; then, pressing himself hard against the grill, tried to get a better view of the courtyard. Under this pressure the door suddenly flew inward, throwing Prescott off his balance so that he staggered and fell with a clatter among the metal utensils by the well. At that instant there came the muffled boom of the Sultan's gun, announcing to the waiting city that the new moon had been seen, and Ramadan was at an end. Cries and laughter went up within the house; women and servants, laughing and shouting, came running into the courtyard to prepare the feast.

As Prescott fell, instinctively I clutched at his cloak; and he managed to recover himself and throw himself back into the shadows without being discovered. But the door was left open, and we could not reach it without being seen.

"Come on," I said, dragging him deeper into the shadows, "we've got to get out of this."

"No," he said excitedly, "not without her." "You dashed fool," I exclaimed, "can't you see she's not here?"

"I'm going to see!"

"They'll knife you!"

A servant, coming for the basins, discovered the open door and let out a series of loud yells that brought the household tumbling in confusion about her. Men were called, and I could hear them running overhead. Our only chance was to retreat through the pitch darkness.

"She's probably outside," I said. "Abu Nawass must have taken her away."

In another minute a child saw Prescott's white face staring in the dark, and she stood still looking at him with distended eyes and changeless countenance, and emitted an appalling scream that had no ending. This was too much even for Prescott and we began tumbling back through that tortuous passage in a nightmare flight, followed by a clamoring, cursing, murderous crowd of Arabs and Swahilis, swinging lights above their heads. We skidded on slippery mats, stumbled over misplaced bales, floundered knee-deep in the spice, tangled in bits of rope and our own flowing garments, feeling as though all the devils of Hell were at our heels.

Though I was not familiar with the godown I was the first to reach the door and seize the bolt we had opened less than fifteen minutes before; but I couldn't budge it.

"Here," I said, "try this, Prescott; you opened it! For God's sake hurry!"

Prescott gave three frantic tugs—ran his fingers over it—and said in a strained whisper:

"It's locked!"

There was nothing to do but dive head first among the scattered bales by the door and lie there shaking as the armed servants flung themselves at the barred door. In their excitement the furious Arabs concluded we had bolted the door behind us to arrest pursuit, and they burst it open with a beam without stopping to search the interior. Pressing my lips against Prescott's ear I whispered:

"If Abu Nawass bolted us in, he's only got a lead of ten minutes——"

"Let's go!" said Prescott, scrambling up.

"Wait," I said, jerking him back. "Don't make a fool of yourself again. The alleyway's blocked at both ends. If we go towards the bazaar, they're bound to discover you with your blue eyes; if we reach the water, we've got a chance of swimming for it."

"I'm hanged if I do," he said, jumping up. "I'll fight them, if they want; but I'm going to find Safie!"

He was beyond argument, so I rose with him and darting through the door tried to lose myself in the darkness and tumult outside. A second group of pursuers, issuing from the front of the *bey*, had appeared at the mouth of the alley, blocking it; and there, as both groups sighted each other dimly in the dark, they fell into a panting, thudding tumult. The sight of vague, sinister shadows slipping through the darkness, light flashing on drawn blades, sticks rising and falling; and the sound of muffled blows, panting oaths and sudden sharp squeals of pain, checked Prescott. He stood looking about him dazedly until I pushed him violently towards the water.

"If Ali Beder can't rescue her," I said aloud, in order to be heard above the confusion, "you haven't got a chance."

A yell went up from beside me: "Christians!"

At the same instant I got a blow across the back from a long stick that sent me on my hands and knees among the rocks and slime. As I rose I gave only one look behind. It seemed to me as if the entire frenzied bazaar were surging down upon us with drawn *jambes* and waving sticks. In a flickering light near the corner I caught a very fleeting glimpse of Abu Nawass, the traitor, with contorted face, shouting at the top of his voice and gesticulating violently with fists above his head; while the great figure of Ali Beder, followed by his household, rushed at us with drawn knife, his heavy stubborn face looking more goat-like and savage than ever.

In a few seconds I felt a coldness and wetness about my feet and found myself reeling up to my ankles in the litter by the water's edge where a light surf broke against the coral buttresses of the godown. In our sudden flight Prescott and I had saved each other at least three times. He was armed only with a stick which he had torn from the hands of the man who first struck me; while I with my *jambes* struck out wildly without hitting anyone, but keeping a space clear about us.

The godowns rose like walls on either hand. With the froth lapping around our knees where the waves broke into pale phosphorescence, I took my *jambes* and slit the *kansa* to the hem. Slipping it off, I put the *jambes* between my teeth and dived. When I came up I turned to look for Prescott.



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As Prescott hesitated at the water's edge, old Ali Beder had flung himself at him with the fury of a madman, actually dragging him down to his knees and flashing his *jambeer* above his head. The action was so swift and determined I had no chance to reach shore again to help; but I raised myself out of the water and threw my *jambeer* with all my strength. By the grace of God it struck the first man behind Ali Beder, a giant Swahili, full on the naked chest with the hilt, which saved me from murder; but the black, believing himself to be mortally wounded, fell backward, leaving Prescott and Ali Beder struggling alone.

Prescott had twisted the *jambeer* from the Arab's hand and with a violent wrench had bent the old man backward and regained his feet. At this moment a beam of light fell upon Prescott's face as he bent over Ali Beder, trying with one hand to choke him. His face was remarkably changed. Streaked with dust and blood, under his tousled sandy hair his eyes blazed; his countenance looked rugged, older, drawn with lines of strength and indomitable passion. Ali Beder let out a babbling scream—the scream of an old and terrified man:

"Ibrahim Effendi! Ibrahim Effendi! Peace! I confess! Allah! Allah is just—"

Tearing himself away from Ali Beder's fingers and flinging him against his retainers, Prescott tore off his cloak and dived after me, streaming phosphorus from every line of his body. Swahilis plunged in too, but, believing either that we were still armed or that friends were waiting for us in a boat, they gave up the chase; and the tumult behind soon became absorbed in the general hubbub of the bazaar. Only one voice reached me coherently—a broken yell, repeated frantically over and over again:

"Peace! Come back! Return with Safie, and I consent! I consent!"

Knowing that Safie was lost to old Ali Beder as well as to us, and in no mood to take chances of treachery by trusting myself in that quarter again, I closed my ears and volunteered no interpretation to Prescott, who swam in silence beside me.

We swam straight out into the roadstead, shedding our clothes until we were stark naked. In this condition we came alongside the navy trawler that had brought me to Dar-Es-Salaam; and we climbed aboard, explaining that we had swum too far and were pretty exhausted. My friends aboard fixed us up with sporting flannels and we were rowed ashore and landed on our own beach.

The sun had set at six o'clock, and it was still only about half-past eight. We found the old *beyt* deserted; and I had to pour myself a peg of brandy to calm the uncomfortable tingling of my nerves. We both stretched ourselves on Indian chairs and sat there saying nothing, I with my eyes staring out into the dark and Prescott with his face buried in the crook of his arm. After a while he stood up and went into his room.

"Anything I can do?" I asked uneasily.

"No, thanks, *bwana*," he said in flat tones. "I just want to lie down in the dark. I'm all right. If my old uncle could stand it, I guess I can—only"—he caught the break in his voice with a gulp—"I don't—see how—"

Sunk into a mood of loneliness, I lay stretched in my chair upon the *barasa*, looking gloomily into the shadows of the balmy night, wondering if my criminal but romantic impulse was going to result in the ruin of my prospects in Zanzibar. With that stigma upon me I had a future to worry about.

The spangled web of a calm tropic night hung its enchantment over the scene. The sea was tremulous with shadows through which the colored lights of ships at anchor faintly glowed. The thin blade of the sinking moon cut through the quivering fronds of the dainty betel palms, and the evening star twinkled like a canary solitaire. I could hear faintly the notes of a Swahili song softened and sweetened by distance until it seemed like the music of a dream. Somewhere in the alley behind two Europeans were talking, the drawl of their voices dropping syllable by syllable upon the still air.

I thought of Prescott's declaration earlier in the evening that romance is the pursuit of love, and my loneliness and depression increased with a sense of futility. I stood up, flipping my cigarette like a shooting star into the dark blue sea, and commenced to pace up and down the *barasa*.

All at once it occurred to me that Abu Nawass could not possibly have escaped with Safie, for I had seen him unaccompanied in the midst of the tumult angrily waving his arms, and arguing. But I knew also that Safie had left her grandfather's house, because he had cried to us to return with her. And certainly she was not with us!

As I stood still, thinking, old Mzee came shuffling up the dark stairway, breathing quickly, but with his dusty old face curved with smiles. Beside him, like a shadow, moved a slight figure, muffled in a long cloak.

"*Bwana*," stammered the old man, bowing with dignity and touching his hand to his forehead, his lips and his heart—the gesture which offers complete submission of mind, of utterance and of affection—"where is the young *effendi*? I have brought the maid to her master's house."

The girl slightly lowered her veil, and I gave a loud shout as I recognized Safie—granddaughter of Ali Beder. She looked slightly frightened, but adorable; and in the surroundings of a European's quarters strikingly resembled a French girl, or an exceptionally beautiful New York Jewess. My spirits leaped with a bound. I advanced towards them, clapping my hands for the servants and shouting for Prescott. Safie, misunderstanding, backed hurriedly away, with hands outstretched, exclaiming confusedly:

"No, no, no! It is not he!"

Then a marvelous change came over her countenance. Her lips parted, her eyes brimmed with feeling; her rigid attitude melted into one of surrender; and Prescott walked by me, muttering:

"It's impossible! My God, it's impossible!"

When he touched her outstretched hands and saw her face turned up to his with the light full on it, he put his arms slowly around her with firmness and tenderness and a lack of self-consciousness that proved, though their lips were inarticulate, their hearts spoke a familiar language.

Old Mzee and I looked at each other for a minute, grimacing; then I drew him to

one side and he explained, spluttering and laughing, that as he carried messages to the godown where Prescott had been examining the clothes, he had caught on to the intrigue. Knowing Arabs, he had suspected Abu Nawass the moment he heard Prescott asking my assistance. He had immediately preceded us to Ali Beder's godown—giving my chit to the O. O. A. to another to deliver—and had stationed himself at the corner of the alleyway and the main bazaar.

Abu Nawass must have entered before we arrived. Mzee saw us enter. Five minutes later Abu Nawass emerged from the godown, leading Safie, completely enveloped in a cloak. Instantly Mzee had let out a watchman's cry of alarm. Abu Nawass, seeing he was trapped, promptly joined in the shout, pushing Safie away from him, and crying, "Christians! Christians have done this!" By this time a crowd had gathered, all shouting confusedly, and in the midst of this confusion the Sultan's gun had gone off. In the uproar, Mzee took Safie by the wrist and led her away, while Abu Nawass, not daring to interfere, watched him, cursing and choking, and waving his fists impotently in the air.

"*Bwana*," said Mzee impressively, "two generations have passed, and look! the story is repeated. I was Ibrahim Effendi's servant in this house. On those very stairs there I stood near him and fought with the Christians." He pulled his *kanza* aside and showed me a white streak across his collar bone. "See. Ali Beder's knife struck me there." Mzee commenced to laugh, softly, almost absent-mindedly. "Allah!" he whispered. "I hit him a harder blow tonight. *Bwana*, you will be my witness, I have again served my old master, Ibrahim Effendi—"

"Mzee," said I, "you are a messenger of fate."

"I am house-boy," said Mzee punctiliously, "in the Afro-American Trading Company."

Fifteen minutes later the O. O. A. put in an appearance.

I swore that Ali Beder had given his consent to the marriage; and the O. O. A., after being presented to the bride, felt no further scruples. A civil ceremony was forthwith performed, and the servants of the house began to drift in, rumors of what was happening having percolated into the bazaar. A messenger arrived from Ali Beder, who, to save his face, gave his consent to the marriage of his granddaughter to the grandnephew of his old friend and benefactor, Ibrahim Effendi, requesting only that he be given an opportunity to feast his friends and celebrate the occasion with due honor. Prescott, now aware of the solemnity of the affair, wisely consented; and we immediately completed arrangements for a religious ceremony on the following morning, to be followed by a banquet among the Arabs; with a banquet to the Europeans on the succeeding day, and a general reception—after which Prescott and his bride would sail on the Tabora for Durban and home.

When this was done, Prescott and Safie, escorted by a guard of honor and a dozen *askaris* to preserve order, were taken in rickshas to one of the missions, where Safie was received as a distinguished guest.

The O. O. A. and I found ourselves again alone upon the *barasa*, looking at each other, half serious, half laughing with

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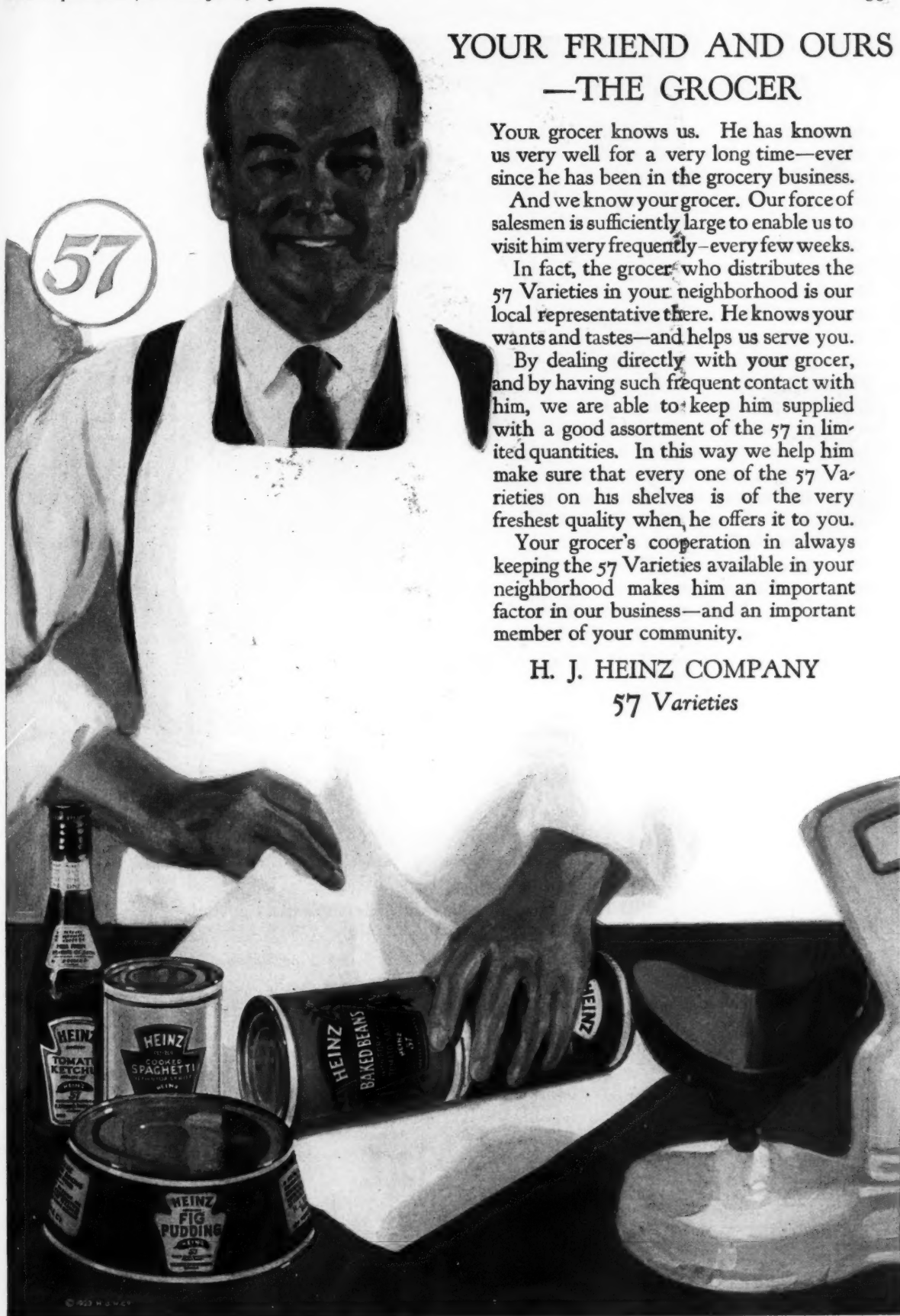
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sardonic humor. It was still short of midnight, and we both felt as though we had been kicked out of a show.

"It beats me," said the O. O. A., looking into his glass and shaking his head solemnly.

At this moment Briggs appeared at the head of the stairs and, thinking himself unperceived, began to sidle softly towards his bedroom with a shamefaced and furtive air. We had utterly forgotten him!

"Wait a minute!" shouted the O. O. A. Briggs gave a start. Then he stopped uncertainly.

"Cheerio," he said lugubriously. "I didn't see you chaps."

"What do you think of the news?" demanded the O. O. A.

"Oh, shut up!" said Briggs wearily.

"Rose-Marie isn't the only fish!"

"Rose-Marie!" I exclaimed. "What about her?"

"Aren't you talking about her?" asked Briggs diffidently.

Then in a sudden spasm of rage he caught hold of a cane chair and slung it with a crash against the wall. "Why, the

little vixen," he cried, "has gone and eloped with that *chee-chi* from the Mauritius! And she never—said a word—to me—about it!"

When the O. O. A. and I disentangled ourselves from the strangling embrace into which we helplessly fell, I said, stifling a spasm:

"Romance, *bwana*, is the pursuit of love!"

"And adventures," replied the O. O. A., swelling visibly before my eyes, "are to the adventurous!"

In June COSMOPOLITAN H. C. Witver launches another ship on the Sea of Laughter, and cordially invites you to be one of the passengers.

The Hunch-Player

(Continued from page 43)

before by Olson. Crisp took them into the office of the managing editor, which opened off the city room and which happened at this time to be untenanted, and bade them be seated. So they took the chairs he indicated, Lieber, the younger man, looking rather awkward in his civilian garb and his broad-toed shoes whereas in his uniform he probably would cut a soldierly figure, and twirling his hard hat in his hands by its brim; Sweeney, middle-aged and sparsely built, with a bristly heavy gray mustache that somehow did not seem quite to match in with his lean face and deep set eyes and high cheek bones.

Then Crisp sat himself down at the managing editor's desk where the light from the two broad windows behind him passed over his shoulder and fell upon his visitors as they fronted him. He spread a couple of galley proofs on the desk top, fumbling them in his hands as he spoke:

"I suppose Mr. Olson told you why I put you to the bother of coming down here again—that I was after your O. K.'s for these sketches of your lives—hasn't he? Well, before we go at that I'd like to talk with you a little bit about this case. I want to see whether your ideas jibe in with mine. This affair interests me—tremendously. There are some mighty curious aspects to it—not that I need to tell you that."

He went on in a somewhat reminiscent fashion:

"I'm reminded of a thing that I heard the late Lawrence Sebastian say, five or six years ago, soon after I came to this town and broke into the newspaper game, doing police. I think Sebastian was about the smartest district attorney this county ever had. Well, I remember that once we were talking in the reporters' room up at the old Criminal Courts Building about crimes in general and he said this: He said that in a town like New York we never knew whose eyes were on us; that sometimes, so it seemed to him, a big city was all eyes and all ears."

As I recall, these were about the words he used:

"A man who's fixing to commit a crime picks out the darkest night in the month, and the quietest place he can think of. He does the job quietly and there's no alarm given. Then he runs away. He's sure nobody saw him; the whole town

seemed to be sound asleep—not a living creature in sight. But it turns out that a man with the toothache is nursing his face in an open window on the top floor of a house halfway down the block. And just around the corner a woman has got up out of bed on account of a sick baby and she happens to look out of her window at exactly the right time. And somebody else a little farther along sees something, too, and, the first thing you know you'll find, if you succeed in rounding up all these unseen and unsuspecting witnesses, that you've got a pretty clear record of your man's movements."

"That's practically what he said and I've never forgotten it."

"Now, in this case it strikes me as a curious thing that nobody caught a glimpse of the murderer getting away from the neighborhood right immediately after the killing must have taken place. And yet, if Mr. Sebastian's theory was correct, somebody should have been running through that street and somebody else should have seen him."

"Well, of course, there was this here trained nurse that was on night duty in that there private residence two doors down from the Lathrop Arms," put in Lieber. "You remember we found her next day. But the only party she seen was Sweeney beatin' it round into the Avenoo to find me—her recognizin' him by his uniform as he passed by the street light under where she was lookin' out."

"Precisely," agreed Crisp; "in a way of speaking, that's in line with the point I was making. Of course, under the circumstances, Sweeney, here, would run—naturally."

"Here's another thing I want to put up to you two while we're alone: Both of you are more or less qualified to be experts in such matters as this one; qualified by your training and your experience and all. I'm only an amateur, as you might say, but, being first of all a newspaperman, I try to figure out how drama—say, a secret motive—might have been at the back of the thing. Maybe I've been a bit far-fetched in conceiving the notion, but I'm going to state now what you might call a hypothetical case. You *might* call it that."

He bent forward, staring hard into their faces. His voice raised and quickened and he aimed a finger at them to emphasize his sharp staccato sentences:

"As a young man, this Trask lives in a small city up in New England. He does a rotten thing to a family in a poorer walk of life than his. We needn't go into the details. But a woman—or rather a girl—figures in it. And it's an unforgettable and an unforgivable thing. And the girl has an older brother, and this brother is not the kind who either forgets or forgives. He dedicates his whole life to squaring the debt—to evening up the score for his sister."

"Well, soon after the scandal breaks, Trask goes away from that town. Shame or fright—I won't presume to say which—causes him to leave. He has money that he inherited and he comes to this town and cuts a dash here. Probably as the years go by he thinks that early chapter in his life is closed and sealed. The girl has died in the meantime; he gets word that the brother also is dead and he has no reason to doubt it."

"But the brother isn't dead. Causing everybody who ever knew him before to think he's dead is only a part of his plan. And it's a good plan. He disappears from his home; he vanishes entirely. After a while news comes back to the town where he used to live that he's been killed on a construction job up in British Columbia. He has no close relatives—only a few cousins—and nobody is particularly interested in verifying the fact of his death."

"To all intents and purposes he has ceased to exist."

"But, as I said just now, he isn't dead at all. He's very much alive. He has changed his name. He has changed his personal appearance—made a pretty good job of it, too. He has provided himself with a new identity, a new personality—in so far as such a thing is possible. He is posing now as a native of a foreign country, as a member of a different racial stock from the one to which he really belongs. He even goes so far as to fit out himself with a fictitious family history, as a sort of background for his supposed birth and childhood. He hasn't overlooked a single imaginable detail."

"He never marries. He devotes his life, his thoughts, his ambitions, to the scheme that's in his head. All along he's planning to kill Trask and yet be absolutely safe from suspicion. It may take him years to bring this about but he's patient—never for a waking minute does he lose sight of his object. All his ways



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are shaped to that end. His only fear is that Trask may die a natural death and cheat him out of his revenge. He establishes a reputation for steadiness and sobriety and respectability. He gets himself placed in a line of employment where, without causing remark, sooner or later he will have his opportunity to study his man at close range, possibly to come into direct contact with him. Some people might call such a man crazy. I'd call him a man of a single purpose—of one abiding idea. Anyhow, chance never figures in his plot; there's a purpose and an intent behind every step he takes.

"In his work he is stationed here first, then there; his employers trust him and value his services. Finally, on perfectly plausible grounds, he succeeds in being transferred in his official duties to the very neighborhood where Trask lives. By reason of his position, he now can come and go at all hours. He bides his time, though; he's waiting for the perfect occasion when all the circumstances will fit in with his scheme, when there won't be a single possible danger of a miscue.

"That time comes—on a certain night. The victim comes along, absolutely unconscious of any personal peril. At the most favorable spot for just such a job the other man is lying in wait. There's a quick word whispered in the dark, a blow from behind and—"

The man Sweeney stood up, his features composed, his voice steady.

"That's enough!" he commanded. "I'll say this for you, young fellow—there's only one or two places where your dope is wrong. I don't regret what I did. I'm not sorry—by God, I'm glad! Some way, I don't even much regret being nailed."

He went on, including the dumb-founded Lieber in what he said now:

"Old pal, you might as well have the credit for making the pinch. You ought to know me well enough by now to know that when I pass my word to go along with you nice and quiet I'll keep my word. Still, if you've got any doubts—"

He held out his hands, palm to palm.

As Crisp that night said to his exultant and congratulatory chief, Wendover: "Both the times when I tolled him down here to the shop I purposely had Lieber brought along, too. In the first place, I wanted to quiet any lurking suspicions our man might have—so that's why I included his friend in the visits. And in the second place, I figured it would be just as well to have a regular cop standing by in case he cut up rough when I began to tip it off to him that I had the goods on him."

"Yes, yes; but what I want to know is—how did you get the goods on him?" demanded his chief.

"Oh, I guess you might call it a case of putting two and two together and getting four!" said Crisp with an air of modesty which did not in the least become him. Really, he was tremendously pleased with himself. "You see, almost from the jump I had the private patrolman chap picked as the right party."

"But why?"

"I'll come to that in a minute. So, having him especially in mind, I assigned Olson to get the histories of the two cops—

not that I ever expected to run it. It was all a part of my plant. Anyhow, I needed time to develop the scheme.

"Well, when Olson came back with his stuff and reported that six weeks before the killing this Sweeney—which was the name that everybody knew him by then—had asked to be shifted from a beat he had downtown in the Maiden Lane jewelry district to a certain beat over on the east side of Fifth Avenue, uptown—the same beat, incidentally, that included the Lathrop Arms—I began to feel sure that I wasn't very far wrong. To be sure, his reason for asking for the transfer seemed perfectly reasonable. He told his boss at the offices of the Hoster company that he'd moved to an address over on Third Avenue near Thirtieth Street and wanted a territory that would be handy and convenient to where he lived. The boss—who gave Olson this detail—didn't attach any significance to it. He didn't think it had any bearing on anything else. And Olson didn't think it was important. Say, that boy has still got a lot to learn about the newspaper game! But I did. It meant something to me.

"So, on the pretext of wanting specially good likenesses of the two of them, I invited Lieber and Sweeney to come down here and be photographed; that was a week ago yesterday. And the moment I got a good look at Sweeney I knew my own private theory was being confirmed in a fresh place.

"According to his personal record, as furnished by him to the Hoster people when he first went to work for them, he'd been born in the County Wicklow, in the Old Country, and brought here by his parents as a child. But I said to myself when I set eyes on him, 'If you're an Irishman then I'm a Swede!'

"Here's the picture we took of him that day. Look at it, Mr. Wendover. If he's not the spittin' image of a born-and-bred New Englander—if he's not a true-to-type small-town Yankee—I'll eat my hat and I'm not very hungry, at that! Well, that didn't absolutely prove anything. A man from the South of Ireland might look like the regulation Yankee just as the Yankee might look like a Dane or a Finn or an Italian, even. But this chap didn't talk like an Irishman."

"But a foreigner brought here as a child might lose his native idioms—might even lose his accent or his dialect or his brogue or whatever it was that marked his speech originally—mightn't he?" asked Wendover.

"Of course he might—and possibly would," answered Crisp. "The brogue might quit him, in time. But, if he happens to be an Irishman born—a Celt on both sides of his family—there's one thing I'll guarantee he'll never lose. He can't lose it, because it's a labial inheritance, because it's come down to him through the generations from the time when his ancestors knew no English and spoke another tongue altogether. My old grandmother lived to be eighty-odd and she'd spent more than sixty of those years in the State of Ohio, but up to the day of her death she said 'I will that' when she affirmed a thing and 'I will not' when she took the negative side; or else she said 'I would not' or 'I would so.' But when I talked to Sweeney, feeling him out, he answered 'Yes,' 'No,' as the case might be, to my questions. And in the Gaelic, so

I'm told, there are no such two words as these. Do you get my point, Mr. Wendover?"

"I'm beginning to see the daylight," said Wendover. "I've got to compliment you again, Crisp. But I'm still puzzled to account for one thing: Back of and behind what you've told me, there must have been a starting point—a primary clue, so to speak, for you to work on. Observation and your powers of deduction served you mighty well, as I now see, once you'd struck the trail. But there had to be a beginning. Out of a clear sky you wouldn't center your suspicions on any one man. At least, I wouldn't."

"Nor would I," assented Crisp. "Just as you say, there had to be a beginning. And this it is." He took a small clipping out of a breast pocket cardcase. "I cut this out of the Morning Transcript's second day stuff on the Trask murder. It's a short dispatch from the town of Medham, Mass., upstate from Boston—the town where Trask was born and grew up."

"It was stuck down at the foot of a column on an inside page at the tail end of the Transcript's local story. As soon as I saw it I sent Sheridan up there—with private instructions not to write up anything but to bring me back what he found out, along certain lines."

Wendover took the slip in his hands, adjusted his nose glasses and read it through.

Then, still with a puzzled pucker between his eyes, he asked:

"I don't see the connection yet. This dispatch merely hints rather vaguely at the old trouble of Trask's youth—mentions a family named Spence—says that a certain Joshua T. Spence, who was a son of that family and a brother of the girl who was mixed up in the mess, went away from this place, Medham, soon after Trask came down here to New York, and afterwards was reported as having been killed in an accident on a Canadian railroad. We know now, and the police know now—thanks to you—that Spence wasn't dead—that he was the man who called himself Sweeney. But what made you suspect it?—that's what I want to know."

"Chief," said Crisp, "it mighty often happens when, for reasons that won't bear investigation, a man changes his name, that he doesn't change his initials. I don't know why, unless it's because keeping the same set of initials makes it easier for him to remember what the new name is while he's getting accustomed to wearing it. It's an old trick with professional criminals. In this case, it would seem that it occurred to an honest man who was aiming to turn criminal. Well, anyhow, it all made good stuff for our extra, didn't it?"

"It surely did," said Wendover. "Mind handing me back my clipping?" asked Crisp. "I think I'll keep on carrying it around in my pocket—for luck."

Irvin Cobb's story next month deals with a crook who, together with the reader, gets the surprise of his life. See COSMOPOLITAN for June, on sale May tenth



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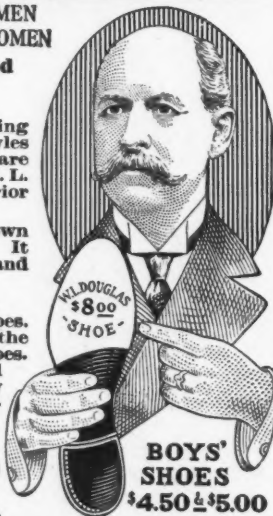
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The Hope of Happiness

(Continued from page 94)

the divan on which she was seated behind the tea table—thrust it out lazily with a minimum of effort.

"Ah—the difficult Mr. Storrs! I'm terribly mortified to be meeting you in a friend's house and not in my own!"

"To meet you anywhere—" began Bruce, but she interrupted him, holding him with her eyes.

"—would be a pleasure! Of course! I know the formula but I'm not a debutante. You didn't like me that day we met at Dale Freeman's, and I was foolish enough to think I'd made an impression!"

"Let's tell him the truth," said Henderson, helping himself to a slice of cinnamon toast. "Bruce, I bet a hundred cigarettes with Connie I could deliver you here and I win!"

"Not a word of truth in that," declared Constance. "Bud's such a dreadful liar!"

Mrs. Torrence said they must have tea and Henderson protested that tea was not to be thought of. Tea, he declared, was extremely distasteful to him; and Bruce always became ill at the sight of it.

"But when I told Connie you were bringing Mr. Storrs she said he was terribly proper and for me not to dare mention cocktails."

"Now Helen, I didn't say just that! What I meant, of course, was that I hoped Mr. Storrs wasn't too proper," said Constance, gazing at the ceiling dreamily.

"Proper!" Bruce caught her up. "This is an enemy's work. Bud, I suspect you of this attempt on my character!"

"Not guilty!" Bud retorted. "The main thing right now is that we're all peevish and need Martinis. What's the Volstead signal, Helen?"

"Three rings, Bud, with a pause between the first and second."

The tea tray was removed and reappeared adorned with all the essentials for the concoction of cocktails. When the glasses were filled and all had expressed their satisfaction at the result, Henderson detained the negro for a conference on dice throwing. He seated himself on the floor the better to receive the man's instructions. The others taunted him with his ineptitude. The negro retired finally with five dollars of Bud's money, a result attained only after the spectators were limp with laughter.

"You're a scream, Bud! A perfect scream!" and Mrs. Torrence refilled the glasses.

She took Bud to the dining room to exhibit a rare Japanese screen acquired in her travels and Bruce found himself alone with Constance. She pointed to her glass, still brimming, and remarked:

"Please admire my abstemiousness! One is my limit."

"Let me see; did I really have three?" asked Bruce as he sat down beside her.

"I want to forget everything this afternoon," she began. "I feel that I'd like to climb the hills of the unattainable, be somewhere else for a while."

"Oh, we all have those spells," he replied. "That's why Prohibition's a failure."

"But life is a bore at times," she

insisted. "Maybe you're one of the lucky ones who never go clear down. A man has his work—there's always that—"

"Hasn't woman gotten herself everything—politics, business, philanthropy? You don't mean to tell me the new woman is already pining for her old slavery! I supposed you led a complete and satisfactory existence!"

"A pretty delusion! I just pretend, that's all. There are days when nothing seems of the slightest use. I thought there might be something in politics but after I'd gone to a few meetings and served on a committee or two it didn't amuse me any more. I played at being a radical for a while, but after you've scared all your friends a few times with your violence it ceases to be funny. The only real joy I got out of flirting with socialism was in annoying my father-in-law. But I had to give that up for fear he'd think I was infecting Shep with my ideas."

V

A TINGE of malice was perceptible in her last words, but she smiled instantly to relieve the embarrassment she detected in his face. He was not sure just how she wanted him to take her. Her unhappiness he assumed to be only a pose—something to experiment with upon men she met on gray afternoons in comfortable houses over tea and cocktails.

Mrs. Shepherd Mills might be dangerous, or she might easily become a bore. When he met her at the Freemans' he had thought her probably guileless under her mask of sophistication. She was proving more interesting than he had imagined, less obvious; perhaps with an element of daring in her blood. He suspected that she had told the truth in saying that she wasn't finding life wholly satisfying; but all things considered there was no reason why she should confide in him. She was quite as handsome as he had thought her at the Freemans' and she had indubitably mastered the art of dressing herself becomingly.

He was watching the play of the shadow of her picture hat on her face, seeking clues to her mood, vexed that he had permitted himself to be brought into her company, when she said:

"I'm not amusing you! Please forgive me. I can't help it if I'm a trifle *triste*. Some little devilish imp is dancing through my silly head. If I took a second glass, now—"

Bruce answered her look of inquiry with a shake of the head.

"Are you asking my advice? I positively refuse to give it; but if you command me, of course—"

He rose, took up the glass and held it high for her inspection.

"The man tempts me—"

"The man doesn't tempt you. We'll say it's the little imp. Mrs. Mills, do you want this cocktail or do you not?"

"It might cheer me up a little," she said meditatively. "I don't want you to think me stupid and I know I'm terribly dull!"

She drank half the cocktail and bade him finish it.

"Oh, certainly!" he replied and drained the glass. "Now under the additional stimulus we can proceed with the discussion. What were we talking about, anyhow?"



Who was to blame?

SHE fascinated each one only for a little while. Nothing ever came of it.

Yet she was attractive—unusually so. She had beguiling ways. Beautiful hair, radiant skin, exquisite teeth and an intriguing smile. Still there was something about her that made men show only a transient interest.

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* * *

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"It doesn't matter. Life offers plenty of problems. How many people in this world are happy—really happy? Now Bud's always cheerful; he and Maybelle are happy—remarkably so, I think. Helen Torrence—well, I hesitate to say whether she's really happy or not; she always appears gay, just as you see her today; and it's something to be able to give the impression, whether it's false or not."

"Yes; it's well to make a front," Bruce replied, determined to keep a frivolous tone with her. "The Freemans enjoy themselves; they're quite ideally mated, I'd say."

"Yes, they're making a success of their lives. Dale and Bill are always cheerful. Now there's dear old Shep—"

"Well, of course he's happy. How could your husband be otherwise?"

"You're not taking me seriously at all! I'm disappointed. I was terribly blue today; that's why I plotted with Bud to get you here—I shamelessly confess that I want to know you better."

"Oh! You're just kidding!"

"You're incorrigible. I'm that rarest of beings—a sincere woman. You refuse to come to my house, presumably because you didn't like me, so I had to meet you here."

"How you misjudge me! You forget; I belong to the toiling masses!"

"You have time for Miss Harden; you two seemed ever so chummy on the golf course. Of course, I can't compete with her—she's beautiful and a genius—so many accomplishments. But you ought to be considerate of a poor creature like me. I'm only sorry I have so little to offer. I really thought you would be a nice playmate; but—"

"A playmate? Aren't we playing now?—at least you are playing with me!"

"Am I?" she asked.

She bent toward him with a slight, an almost imperceptible movement of her shoulders, and her lips parted tremulously in a wistful smile of many connotations. She was not without her charms; she was a very pretty woman; and there was nothing vulgar in her manner of exercising her charms. Bruce touched her hand, gently clasped it—a slender, cool hand. She made no attempt to release it; and it lay lingering and acquiescent in his clasp. He raised it and kissed the finger tips.

"You really understand about me; I knew you would," she murmured. "It's terrible to be lonely. And you are so big and strong; you can help me if you want to—"

"I have no right to help you," he said. "It's part of the game in this funny world that we've got to help ourselves."

"But if you knew I needed you—"

"Ah, but you don't!" he replied.

Bud tiptoed in with a tray containing highball materials and placed it on the tea table. He urged them in eloquent pantomime to drink themselves to death and tiptoed out again.

"Shep speaks of you often; he likes you and really Shep's ever so interesting," Constance resumed.

"Yes," Bruce answered, serious now; "he has ideas and ideals—really thinks about things in a fine way."

He was not pleased by the turn the talk had taken. He did not care to discuss Shepherd Mills with Shepherd's wife,

even when, presumably, she was merely bringing her husband into the conversation to create an atmosphere of intimacy.

"Shep isn't a cut-up," she went on pensively, "and he doesn't know how to be a good fellow with men of his own age. And he's so shy he's afraid of the older men. And his father—you've met Mr. Mills? Well, Shep doesn't seem able to get close to his father."

"That happens, of course, between fathers and sons," Bruce replied. "Mr. Mills—"

He paused, took a cigarette from his case and put it back. There was no reason whatever why he should discuss with Mrs. Shepherd Mills, who was all but a stranger, the relations of her husband with her father-in-law. Bruce was by turns perplexed, annoyed, angry and afraid—afraid that he might in some way betray himself.

"Mr. Mills is a curious person," Constance continued. "He seems to me like a man who lives alone in a formal garden with high walls on four sides and has learned to ignore the roar of the world outside—a prisoner who carries the key of his prison house but can't find the lock!"

Bruce bent his head toward her, intent upon her words. He hadn't thought her capable of anything so imaginative. Some reply was necessary; he would make another effort to get rid of a subject that both repelled and fascinated him.

"I suppose we're all born free; if we find ourselves shut in it's because we've built the walls."

"How about my walls?" she asked. "Do you suppose I can ever escape?"

"Why should you?—don't you like your garden?"

"Not always; no! It's a little stifling sometimes!"

"Then push the walls back a little! It's a good sign, isn't it, when we begin to feel cramped?"

"You're doing a lot better! I begin to feel more hopeful about you. You really could be a great consolation to me if—if you weren't so busy!"

"I really did appreciate your invitation. I'll be around very soon."

After all, he decided, she was only flirting with him or laying the grounds for a flirtation. Her confidences were only a means of awakening his interest, stirring his sympathy. She was probably without aims or aspirations worthy of the name. Very likely she had never loved Shepherd, but she respected his high-mindedness and really wanted to help him. The depression to which she confessed was only the common ennui of her class and type; she needed occupation, doubtless children would solve her problem to some extent. Her life ran too smooth a course; life was not meant to be like that.

His mother in her cheery way used to say, when he would go to her with the small troubles of his childhood and youth: "It's as easy to laugh, dear, as to cry. We've all got to have our tribulations." He thought oftener than he knew of his mother. Conscious that he was thinking of her as he sat talking to the daughter-in-law of Franklin Mills, he remembered what she had said and written about serving Mills if ever it lay in his power. He experienced a sense of unreality, such a feeling as may at times disturb an actor when, in the midst of some scene he is

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enacting, he seems to be hearing and watching himself in the character he is impersonating.

VI

HE WAS impatient to leave, but Mrs. Torrence and Henderson had started a phonograph and were dancing in the hall. Constance seemed unmindful of the noise they were making.

"Shall we join in that romp?" asked Bruce.

"Thanks, no—if you don't mind! I suppose it's really time to run along. May I fix a drink for you? It's too bad to go away and leave all that whisky!"

The music ended in a jazzy saxophone wail and Mrs. Torrence and Henderson were heard noisily greeting several persons who had just come in.

"It's Leila," said Constance, rising and glancing at the clock. "She has no business being here at this time of day."

"Hello, Constance! Got a beau?"

Leila peered into the room, struck her hands together and called over her shoulder.

"Come in, lads! See what's here! Oh, Mr. What's-your-name—"

"Mr. Storrs," Constance supplied.

"Of course! Mr. Storrs, Mr. Thomas and Mr. Whitford!"

Bruce had heard much of Whitford at the University Club, where he was one of the most popular members. He had won fame as an athlete in college and was a polo player of repute. A cosmopolitan by nature, he had traveled extensively and in the Great War had won honorable distinction. Having inherited money he was able to follow his own bent. It was whispered that he entertained literary ambitions. He was one of the chief luminaries of the Dramatic Club, coached the players and had even produced several one act plays of his own that had the flavor of reality. He was of medium height and looked the soldier and athlete. Women had done much to spoil him, but in spite of his preoccupation with society, men continued to like "Whit," who was a thoroughly good fellow and a clean sportsman.

Thomas, having expressed his pleasure at meeting Bruce, was explaining to Mrs. Torrence how he and Whitford had met Leila downtown.

"Liar!" exclaimed Leila, who was pouring herself a drink. "You did nothing of the kind. We met at the Burtons' and Nellie gave us a little drink—just a tweeney, stingy little drink."

The drink she held up for purposes of illustration was not infinitesimal, Bruce noticed. Mrs. Torrence said that everyone must have a highball and proceeded to prepare a drink for Thomas and Whitford.

"You and Connie are certainly the solemn owls," she remarked to Bruce. "Anyone would have thought you were holding a funeral in here. Say when, Fred. This is real Bourbon that Jim treasured for years. You'll never see anything like it again."

"Bruce," cried Henderson, "has Connie filled you with gloom? She gets that way sometimes but it doesn't mean anything. A little of this oily Bourbon will set you up. This bird Storrs always did have glass legs," he explained to Thomas; "he can drink gallons and be ready to converse



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with bishops. Never saw such a capacity! If I get a few more Maybelle will certainly hand it to me when I get home."

Constance walked round the table to Leila, who had drunk a highball and was preparing a second.

"No more, Leila!" said Constance, in a low tone. The girl drew back defiantly.

"Go away, Connie! I need just one more."

"You had more than you needed at the Burtons'. Please, Leila, be sensible. Helen, send the tray away."

"Leila's all right!" said Thomas, but at a sign from Mrs. Torrence he picked up the tray and carried it out.

"I don't think it pretty to treat me as though I were shot when I'm not," said Leila petulantly. She walked to the farther end of the room and sat down with the injured air of a rebellious child.

"Leila, do you know what time it is?" demanded Constance. "Your father's having a dinner and you've got to be there."

"I'm going to be there! There's loads of time. Everybody sit down and be comfortable!" Leila composedly sipped her drink as though to set an example of leisure to the others. Thomas had come back and Constance said a few words to him in a low tone.

"Oh, shucks! I know what you're saying. Connie's telling you to take me home," said Leila. She turned her wrist to look at her watch—frowned in the effort of focusing upon it and added with a shrug: "There's all the time in the world. If you people think you can scare me you've got another guess coming. It's just ten minutes of six; dinner's at seven-thirty! I've got to rest a little. You all look so ridiculous standing there glaring at me."

"Really, dear," said Mrs. Torrence coaxingly, walking toward Leila with her hands outstretched much as though she were trying to make friends with a reluctant puppy. "Do run along home like a good girl."

Leila apparently had no intention of running along home like a good little girl. She dropped her glass—empty—and without warning caught the astounded lady tightly about the neck.

"Stepmother! Dear, nice stepmamma!" she cried. "Nice, dear, sweet, kind stepmamma! Helen's going to be awful good to poor little Leila. Helen not be bad stepmamma like story books; Helen be nice, kind stepmamma and put nice, beautiful gin cocktails in baby's bottle!"

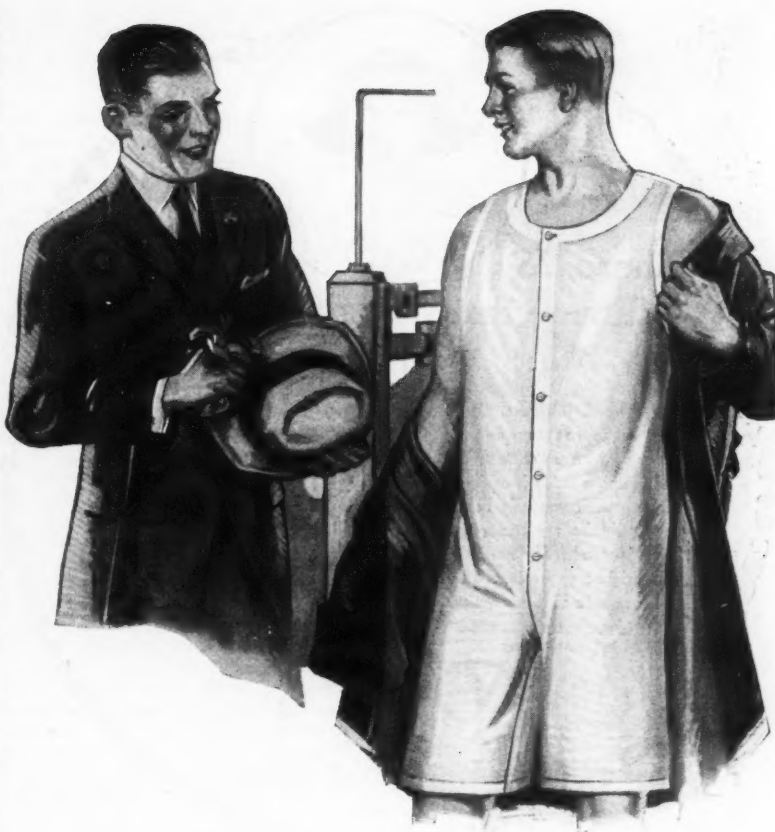
As she continued in cooing tones that only emphasized her mockery Leila stroked her captive's cheek and kissed her tenderly. Henderson and Thomas were shouting with laughter; Constance viewed the scene with lofty disdain; Whitford was mildly amused; Bruce, wishing himself somewhere else, withdrew toward the door, prepared to leave at the earliest possible moment. When at last Mrs. Torrence freed herself she sank into a chair and her laughter attained a new pitch of shrillness.

"Leila, you'll be the death of me!" she gasped when her mirth had spent itself.

"Leila will be the death of all of us," announced Constance solemnly.

"Oh, I don't know!" said Leila, straightening her hat composedly at the mantel mirror.

"Now, Leila," said Constance severely,



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"do run along home. Please let me take you in my car; you oughtn't to drive in the condition you're in."

The remark was not fortunate. Leila had discovered a box of bonbons and was amusing herself by tossing them into the air and trying to catch them in her mouth. She scored one success in three attempts and curtsied to an imaginary audience.

"My condition!" she said, with fine scorn. "I wish you wouldn't speak as though I were a common drunkard."

"Anyone can see that you're not fit to go home. Your father will be furious."

"Not if I tell him I've been with you!" Leila flung back.

"Say, Leila!" began Henderson, ingratiatingly. "We're old pals—you and I—let's shake this bunch. I'll do something nice for you sometime."

"What will you do?" Leila demanded with provoking deliberation.

"Oh, something mighty nice! Maybelle and I will give you a party and you can name the guests."

"Stupid!" she yawned. "Your hair's mussed, Helen. You and Bud have been naughty."

"Your behavior isn't ladylike," said Thomas. "The party's getting rough! Come on, let's go."

"Oh, I'm misbehaving, am I? Well, I guess my conduct's as good as yours! Where do you get this stuff that I'm a lost lamb? I'm just a little bit tipsy—that's all! If I had a couple more highballs—"

VII

BY A signal passed from one to the other they began feigning to ignore her. Constance said she was going; Bud, Whitford and Thomas joined Bruce at the door where he was saying good night to Mrs. Torrence. Leila was not so tipsy but that she understood what they were doing.

"Think you can freeze me out, do you? Well, I'm not so easily friz! Mr. What's-your-name—" she fixed her eyes upon Bruce detainingly.

"Storrs," Bruce supplied good-naturedly.

"You're the only lady or gentleman in this room. I'm going to ask you to take me home!"

"Certainly, Miss Mills!"

With a queenly air she took his arm. Henderson ran forward and opened the door, the others hanging back silent, afraid to risk a word that might reopen the discussion and delay her departure.

"Shall I drive?" Bruce asked when they reached the curb.

"Yes; thanks, if you don't mind."

"Home?" he inquired as he got the car under way.

"I was just doing a little thinking," she said. "It will take only five minutes to run over to that little cafeteria on Fortieth Street. Some coffee wouldn't be a bad thing, and would you mind turning the wind shield?—I'd like the air."

"A good idea," said Bruce and stepped on the gas. The car had been built for Leila's special use and he had with difficulty squeezed himself into the driver's seat; but he quickly caught the hang of it. He stopped a little beyond the cafeteria to avoid the lights of the busy corner and brought out a container of hot coffee and paper cups.

"Like a picnic, isn't it?" she said. "You won't join me?"

She sipped the coffee slowly while he stood in the street beside her.

"There!" she said. "Thank you, ever so much. Quarter of seven? Forty-five minutes to dress! Just shoot right along home now. Would you mind driving over to the boulevard and going in that way? Gives me more air. It does feel good!"

"Nothing would please me more," he said and looked down at her as they passed under the lights at a crossing. She was staring straight ahead, looking singularly young as she lay back with her hands clasped in her lap.

"Constance was furious!" she said suddenly. "Well, I suppose she had a right to be. I had no business getting lit."

"Well, strictly speaking, you shouldn't do it," he said. "It was not the time nor the place and he was not the proper person to lecture her upon her delinquencies. But he had not been displeased that she chose him to take her home, even though the choice was only a whim."

"You must think me horrid! This is the second time you've seen me teed up too high."

"I've seen a lot of other people teed up much higher! You're perfectly all right now!"

"Absolutely! That coffee fixed me; I'm beginning to feel quite bully. I can go home now and jump into my joy rags and nobody will ever be the wiser. This is an old folks' party but dada always wants to exhibit me when he feeds the nobility—can you see me?"

Her low laugh was entirely reassuring as to her sobriety, and he was satisfied that she would be able to give a good account of herself at her father's table.

"Just leave the car on the drive," she said as they reached the house. "Maybe I can crawl up to my room without dada knowing I'm late. Here, I'm leaving you stranded! Well, thanks awfully!"

He walked with her to the entrance and she was taking out her key when Mills, in his evening clothes, opened the door.

"Leila! You're late!" he exclaimed sharply. "Where on earth have you been?"

"Just gadding about, as usual!" replied Leila airily. "But I'm in plenty of time, dada. Please thank Mr. Storrs for coming home with me. Good night and thank you some more!"

She darted into the house, leaving Bruce confronting her father.

"Oh, Mr. Storrs!" The emphasis on the name was eloquent of Mills's surprise that Bruce was on his threshold. Bruce had decided that any explanations that might be required were better left to Leila, who was probably an adept in explanations. He was about to turn away when Mills stepped outside.

"We're entertaining tonight," he said pleasantly. "I was a little afraid something had happened to my daughter."

A certain dignity of utterance marked his last words—"my daughter"—he gave the phrase all possible connotations of paternal pride.

Bruce, halfway down the steps, paused until Mills had concluded his remark. Then, lifting his hat with a murmured good night, he hurried toward the gate. An irresistible impulse caused him to look back. Mills remained just inside the

entry, his figure clearly defined by the overhead lights, staring toward the street. Seeing Bruce look back he went quickly into the house and the heavy door boomed upon him.

Bruce walked slowly to a street car and rode downtown for dinner. The fact that Mills was waiting at the door for Leila was not without its significance, hinting at a constant uneasiness for her safety beyond ordinary parental solicitude. What Constance had said that afternoon about Mills came back to him. He was oppressed by a sense of something tragic in Mills's life—the tragedy of a failure that wore outwardly the guise of success.

In spite of a strong effort of will to obliterate these thoughts he found his memory dragging into his consciousness odd little pictures of Mills—fragmentary snapshots, more vivid and haunting than complete portraits: the look Mills gave him the first time they met at the Country Club; Mills's shoulders and the white line of his collar above his dinner coat as he left the Hardens' the night Bruce saw him there; and now the quick change in his face from irritation to relief and amiable courtesy when he admitted Leila.

Henderson and Millicent and now today Constance had given him hints of Mills's character, and Bruce found himself trying to reconcile and unify their comments and fit them into his own inferences and conclusions. The man was not without his fascinations as a subject for analysis. Behind that gracious exterior there must be another identity either less noble or finer than the man the world knew . . . Before he slept, Bruce found it necessary to combat an apprehension that, if he continued to hear Mills dissected and analyzed, he might learn to pity the man.

VIII

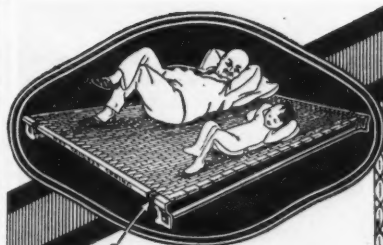
THAT evening when Shepherd Mills went home he found Constance seated at her dressing table, her heavy golden brown hair piled loosely upon her head, while her maid rubbed cold cream into her throat and face. She espied him in the mirror and greeted him with a careless, "Hello, Shep. How did the day go with you?"—the question employed by countless American wives in saluting their husbands at the end of a toilsome day.

"Oh, pretty good!" he replied. No husband ever admits that a day has been wholly easy and prosperous.

She put out her hand for him to kiss and bade him sit down beside her. He was always diffident before the mysteries of his wife's toilet. He glanced at the gown laid across a chair and surveyed the crystal and silver on the dressing table with a confused air.

The room denoted Constance Mills's love of luxury, and incidentally her self-love. The walls on two sides were set in mirrors that reached from ceiling to floor. The furniture, the rugs, the few pictures, the window draperies had been chosen with an exquisite care and combined in an evocation of the spirit of indolence. There was a much be-pillowed divan across one corner, so placed that when she enjoyed a siesta Constance could contemplate herself in the mirrors without turning her head. Scents—a mingling of faint exotic odors—hung upon the air.

She was quick to note that something



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was on Shepherd's mind and half from curiosity, half in a spirit of kindness, dismissed the maid as quickly as possible.

"You can hook me up, Shep. I'll do my hair myself. I won't need you any more, Marie. Yes—my blue cloak. Now, little boy, go ahead and tell me what's bothering you."

Shepherd frowned and twisted his mustache as he sat huddled on the divan.

"It's about father; nothing new, just our old failure to understand each other. It's getting worse. I never know where I stand with him."

"Well, does anyone?" Constance asked serenely. "You really mustn't let him get on your nerves. There are things you've got to take because we all do; but by studying him a little and practicing a little patience you'll escape a lot of worry."

"Yes," he assented eagerly. "You know he just pretends that I'm the head of the battery plant; Fields is the real authority there. It's not the president but the vice-president who has the say about things. Father consults Fields constantly. He doesn't trust me—I'm just a figurehead."

"Fields is such an ass," remarked Constance with a shrug of her shapely shoulders. "An utterly impossible person. Why not just let him do all the explaining to your father? If any mistakes are made at the plant then it's on him."

"But that's not the way of it," Shepherd protested plaintively. "He gets the praise; I get the blame."

"Oh, well, you can't make your father over! You ought to be glad you're not of his hard-boiled variety. You're human, Sheppy, and that's better than being a magnificent iceberg."

"Father doesn't see things; he doesn't realize that the world's changing," Shepherd went on stubbornly. "He doesn't see that the old attitude toward labor won't do any more."

"He'll never see it," said Constance. "Things like that don't hit him at all. He's like those silly people who didn't know there was anything wrong in France till their necks were in the guillotine."

"I told you about that clubhouse I wanted to build for our people on the Milton farm? I hate to give that up. It would mean so much to those people. And he was all wrong in thinking it would injure the property. I think it's only decent to do something for them."

"Well, how can you do it without your father?" she asked, shifting herself for a better scrutiny of her head in the mirror.

"You know that little tract of land—about twenty acres, back of the plant? I could buy that and put the clubhouse there. I have some stock in the Rogers Trust Company I could sell—about two hundred shares. It came to me through mother's estate. Father has nothing to do with it. The last quotation on it is two hundred. What do you think of that?"

"Well, I think pretty well of it," said Constance. "Your father ought to let you build the clubhouse but he has a positive passion for making people uncomfortable."

"I suppose," continued Shepherd dubiously, "if I go ahead and build the thing—even with my own money—he would be angry. Of course there may be something in his idea that if we do a thing of this kind it would make the workmen at other plants restless—"

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"Piffle!" exclaimed Constance. "That's the regular old stock whimper of the back number. You might just as well say that it would be a forward step other employers ought to follow!"

"Yes, there's that!" he agreed, his eyes brightening at the suggestion.

"If you built the house on your own land the storage battery company wouldn't be responsible for it in any way."

"Certainly not!" Shepherd was increasingly pleased that she saw it all so clearly.

She had slipped on her gown and was instructing him as to the position of the hooks.

"No; the other side, Shep. That's right. There's another bunch on the left shoulder. Now you've got it! Thanks ever so much."

He watched her admiringly as she paraded before the mirror to make sure that the skirt hung properly.

"If there's to be a row—" he began as she opened a drawer and selected a handkerchief.

"Let there be a row! My dear Shep, you're always too afraid of asserting yourself. What could he do? He might get you up to his office and give you a bad quarter of an hour; but he'd respect you more afterwards if you stood to your guns. His vanity and family pride protect you. Catch him doing anything that might get him into the newspapers—not Franklin Mills!"

Relieved and encouraged by her understanding and sympathy, he explained more particularly the location of the land he proposed buying. It consisted of an old farmhouse, an orchard and a small creek, quite as convenient to the industrial colony that had grown up about the storage battery plant as the Milton land his father had refused to let him use. The land was bound to appreciate in value, he said.

"What if it doesn't!" exclaimed Constance with mild scorn. "You'll have been doing good with your money anyhow."

"You think, then, you'd go ahead—sell the stock and buy the land. It's so late now, maybe I'd better wait till spring?"

"That might be better, Shep. You asked your father to help and he turned you down. Your going ahead will have a good effect on him. He needs a jar. Now run along and dress. You're going to be late for dinner."

"Yes, I know," he said, rising and looking down at her as she sat turning over the leaves of a book. "Connie—"

"Yes, Shep," she murmured absently.

"Connie—" he stammered and took her hand. "Connie—you're awfully good to me. You know I love you—"

"Why of course, you dear baby!" She lifted her head with a quick, reassuring smile. "But for goodness sake run along and change your clothes!"

IX

WHEN his guests had gone, Mills, as was his habit, smoked a cigar and discussed the dinner with Leila. He was aware that in asking her to join him on such occasions of state he was subjecting her to a trying ordeal, and tonight he was particularly well pleased with her. Now and then she had flung into the talk of her elders an amusing, pertinent comment that added greatly to the cheer of the



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company. She had keen intuitions in matters in which her knowledge was scant and her remarks sometimes were startlingly apt.

"They all enjoyed themselves, dada; you needn't worry about that party!" Leila remarked, smoking the cigarette she had denied herself while the guests remained.

"I think they did; thank you very much for helping me."

Leila had charm; he was always proud of an opportunity to display her to her mother's old friends, whose names, like his own, carried weight in local history. His son was a Shepherd; Leila, he persuaded himself, was, with all her waywardness and little follies, more like himself. Leila looked well at his table, and her dramatic sense made it possible for her to act the rôle of the daughter of the house with the formality that was dear to him. Whenever he entertained he and Leila received the guests together, standing in front of Mrs. Mills's portrait. People who dared had laughed about this, speculating as to the probable fate of the portrait in case Mills married again.

"I'd got nervous about you when you were so late coming," Mills was saying. "That's how I came to be at the door. Just what did you do all day? Your doings are always a mystery to me."

"Well—let me see—I went downtown with Millie this morning, and home with her for lunch, and we talked a while and I ran out to the Burtons' and there were some people there and we gassed; and then I remembered I hadn't seen Mrs. Torrence since she got home, so I took a dash up there. And Connie was there, and Bud Henderson came up with Mr. Storrs and we had tea and Mr. Storrs was coming this way so I let him drive me home."

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The Garden of Peril

(Continued from page 52)

when his heart would suddenly want to stop for good just before he fell into that deep, dark pit of sleep from which it seemed there would be no returning? He had spoken to Kelly only this morning about that horrible nightmare of sleep, and Kelly had listened with that vague, dreamy air of his and made no comment. Nothing to be done about it, evidently. Grin and bear it, Pam concluded. What did it matter anyhow so long as he had these lovely evening hours alone with Doria and his new found happiness?

This was the time when she was at her sweetest, waiting on him with her own hands, trailing round the dinner table to do things for him, gay and witty, as always after her three hours' rest, as though she had been communing with the gods instead of lying in a hammock under the trees as she said she mostly did. Invariably she came back more vivid, more alive, fuller of hope and plans for their future together. Sometimes, listening to her, a strange fear would grip his heart, remembering that menacing sleep awaiting him followed by the early morning agony of piercing knives in his vitals. But Doria seemed so unconscious of anything's being wrong, so confident that one of these days, soon,

This, uttered with smooth volubility, was hardly half the truth. She lighted a fresh cigarette and blew a series of rings while waiting to see whether he would cross-examine her, as he sometimes did.

"Constance was there, was she? Any one else?"

"Fred Thomas and Georgy Whitford blew in just as I was leaving."

"So? I shouldn't have thought Mrs. Torrence would be interested in those fellows."

"Oh, she isn't!" replied Leila, who hadn't intended to mention Thomas or Whitford. "Connie was trying to talk Helen into taking a perfectly marvelous part in the new play the Dramatic Club's putting on soon, and they are in it, too. Highbrow discussion; it bored me awfully—Mr. Storrs and I managed to escape."

"Does this Storrs go about among people you know?" Mills asked.

"Oh, I think so, dada! He was in college with Bud Henderson, you know, and is in Mr. Freeman's office. Dale's crazy about him. You could hardly say he's pushing himself. I asked him to call and he hasn't and he has been to see Millie. I guess the joke's on me!"

He stood to receive her good night kiss. When he heard her door close he took several turns across the room before resuming his cigar.

He lifted his eyes occasionally to the portrait of his father on the opposite wall. It might have seemed that he tried to avoid it, averting his gaze to escape the frank, steady eyes. But always the fine face drew him back. When he got up finally and walked to the door it was with a hurried step as if the room or his meditations had suddenly become intolerable.

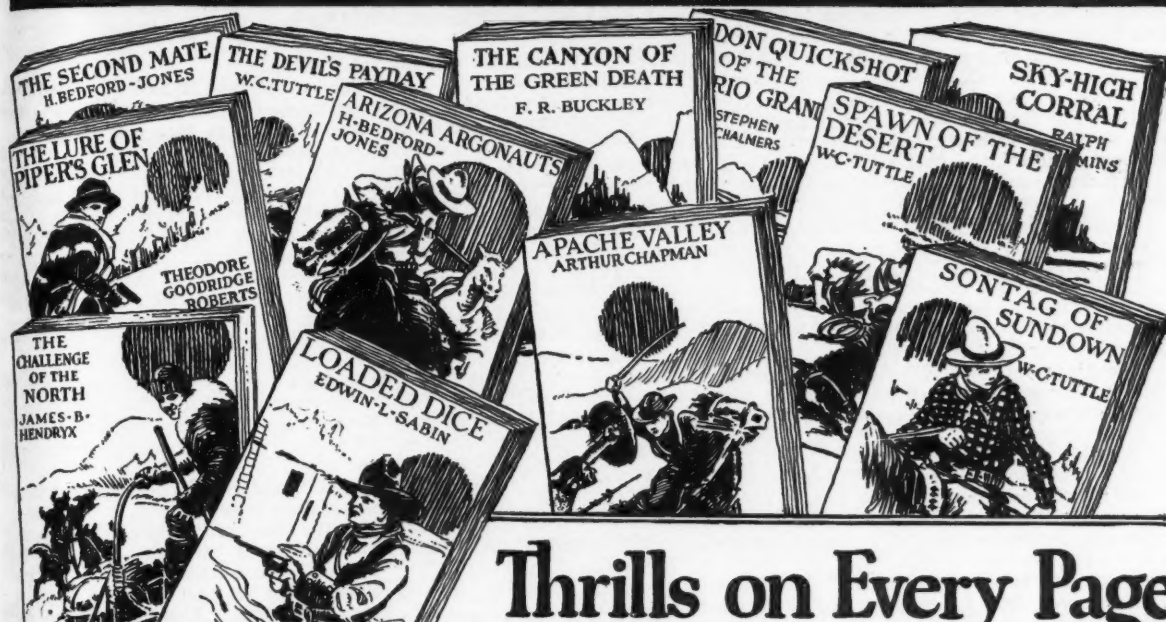
would find them both at Scawnsbane well and happy, that almost she persuaded him past his own beliefs and fears.

No wonder they spun out this time of theirs together as long as possible, sitting late at the table over liqueurs and smokes. Doria made the coffee herself in a little coffee machine, and poured it for him with her own hands, helping him to liqueur and cutting and lighting his cigar. Then she would steal round the table, so alluring in her loose tea gown, and slip on to his knee, her lovely daffodil head against his, her scented cheek to his lips. Her arm would be round his neck, and his about the delicious curve of her waist.

It almost seemed worth while to have lost Dick for the sake of finding, in his grief, this new and adorable Doria. But immediately he recanted that. No—the tragedy of that young life cut off in its bloom would never lose its sharpness, nor find compensation.

But in this magic hour of his and Doria's he could at least forget death, and banish all sad things for a while. Later, Nurse Gordon would come back from the hospital to settle him for the night, before going back too; and occasionally Kelly would look in to say a last word.

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Provoking that he should stalk in that evening, though, while the two were still lost in their happy reveries, actually surprising Doria on his knee, and causing a rather embarrassed scramble on her part. But Doria was too finished a *femme du monde* to be put out of countenance for long by any set of circumstances and easily resumed her natural dignity, getting the Doctor a cup of coffee and insisting on his having a liqueur. Her husband's and hers stood on the table beside their coffee cups, two lovely vases of color, one gleaming bright emerald, the other rosy red.

"Which will you have, Doctor?" she gaily inquired. "A port light, or a dangersignal?"

"Both look highly injurious," he smiled. "Which is which, may I ask? And of what are they composed?"

"The green stuff is *crème de menthe*, of course, my favorite liqueur, and therefore personally recommended. The other is sloe gin—rather a pet of Pam's."

"Sloe gin, upon my soul! Now where did you manage to get such a luxury as that? I don't think I have ever seen it in the country before."

"Probably not, for when you gave permission for Pam to have little drinks again, I had to wire to Cape Town for these. This wretched country never seems to go in for anything but whisky! Now which will you try, Doctor? I really think the *crème de menthe* is best as a digestive."

"Thank you—but I think I'd like a little of the port light." The Doctor looked round for the bottle, but Doria with the alacrity of a good hostess had already reached the sideboard and taken it up. But she stood there with a laughing and backward glance at her husband.

"Drink yours up quickly, Pam, darling. Doctor Kelly may forbid you when he finds how fascinatingly heady it is."

She stood laughing and guarding the bottle, while her husband entering into the jest laughed too, and taking up his glass drained the contents.

"Oh, come, I didn't know I was such an ogre as all that!" remonstrated Bruce Kelly. "But of course I like to know what my patients are up to when I'm not on hand, and to sample for myself occasionally such dissipations as they are indulging in."

He took the glass of bright liqueur from his hostess's hand and set it on the table before him.

"Is that why you came round tonight?" quizzed Doria mischievously, holding out the cigars. "Do try one. Pam's smokes are really to be recommended, like everything men choose for themselves. You'll like them better than it seems you do my poor little sloe gin!" For the Doctor was not drinking, only holding it up to the light.

"This is not the famous port light you were drinking, Heseltine, surely?"

"But of course," cried Doria, surprise in her voice. "We've only got one kind. Oh, Doctor! Doctor! I can tell you are up to some mischief! I believe you're going to pretend it's too strong for Pam."

"No—no, indeed!" The Doctor sipped at his glass and set it down. "There's no harm in that, I'm sure. Only"—he looked at it critically again, then at Pam's empty glass—"it seems to me a good deal lighter in color than the stuff you had."

"There, I *knew* it!" cried Doria in mock despair, but Pam, looking at the Doctor's drink, was inclined to agree.

"It *does* look lighter, somehow. Still, I swear we're not working a fraud on you, Doc." He laughed at the idea, they all laughed together, and the Doctor finished his drink.

"I mustn't stop. What I really came for, Heseltine, was to say that from what you told me this morning about your sleep I think we'd better discontinue the afternoon injections for a bit."

So, the old Doc *had* considered it after all, thought Pam; but he wished no mention had been made of the matter before Doria, for as soon as they were alone again she insisted breathlessly on knowing everything about his deep sleeping, his racking pains; not a single pain or symptom would she let him off, and broke in all the time with little panting cries of "Oh Pam! . . . my darling! . . . What a shame! . . . How awful for you, poor boy! . . . Oh dear, what *can* we do?" with fervid little tight clasps and embraces, and kisses dropped like flowers over his face.

"And I *know*—I feel it in my bones that he's going to be disagreeable about your having drinks and coffee and liqueurs. You'll see."

"Well, if he *is* what's it matter, dear? I can manage, as long as he'll get me well."

"But why *should* you be denied every little pleasure?" Then she stopped and looked at her husband earnestly. "Do you really altogether believe in him and his injections, Pam?"

"Believe in him?" Pam stared. "Certainly I do."

"Oh, well!" she sighed anxiously. "I hope you are right, but it seems to me that introducing some sort of poisonous berry juice into the human system is a fantastic—"

Her husband laughed at her doubts. "Old Bruce Kelly is one of the first medical scientists living—knows all about human systems and what they can stand, believe me."

"I only hope he does, darling," she sighed again and resigned the subject.

But she was right at any rate in her foreshadowing of resumed restrictions, for the very next morning the Doctor had a whole fresh list of things his patient was not to do and take, including coffee, sundowners, liqueurs and sitting up late; and a new régime which included bed at eight after a milk meal to be superintended by Nurse Gordon, "so's not to have any spoiling nonsense from doting wives," he privately told Pam, who did *not* repeat the remark to Doria. She was furious enough already at the new arrangement, insisting on looking upon it as a direct slight to her in her capacity as nurse. She told Bruce Kelly so too, looking angry and tearful, like a wounded child, but as they were alone together he thought it as well to treat her like a grown-up woman.

"Your husband's condition is worrying me very much, Mrs. Heseltine. He has for some time been slowly reverting to his state when he first came here, and I'm afraid you don't realize how grave that is."

"Oh, yes—I have realized it for a long while! It is *you* I think who—" she stopped.

"What do you wish to say?"

"That if the injections had been stopped—"

"Yes?" he interrogated with bland and deadly quiet. "Continue, please."

"Probably we would not now have to

be stopping the only things that help him at all—good meals, and an occasional glass of stimulant."

There was silence in the room; then Bruce Kelly took up his hat.

"As you seem to have quite finished talking balderdash and trying to teach me my business, Mrs. Heseltine, I'll bid you good morning."

She wept about it to Pam, said she'd been insulted and if it weren't for *him* she never would have that old bear in the house again.

"All because I fought for you to have your little sundowners and drinks, dearest—which I *know* do you good—And you *shall* have them, too, as long as I'm alive to get them for you."

"I really don't myself think they do me any harm, Doria; in fact, when I've had a bad go of pain a drink is the only thing that pulls me together—so if that's all you're scrapping about with Kelly, it's easily got over. We'll circumvent him."

She clapped her hands, her laugh echoed through the house like a silver chime: "Yes . . . yes . . . we'll circumvent the bear."

And thenceforward it became an exciting sort of game to get in the daily sundowner, the little cup of coffee, the glass of liqueur, at unsuspected moments, dodging the Doctor, and completely deceiving the nurse. They got a lot of fun out of it; at least Doria did. Pam might have got more if from day to day the conviction had not been growing upon him that fun and he would soon be finished with each other forever.

He still rose from bed, which he found an unbearable place, and daily arrangements went on as before, with Nurse Gordon coming and going a little more often than usual, but unable to be there entirely because with the fever season in full swing the hospital was packed and short-handed. Doctor Kelly's hands, too, were overfull with malarial cases. It was comparatively easy for husband and wife to play their little "game" undetected, for Pam found less and less pleasure in anything that he took, except the stimulants his wife managed to convey to him, and his daily agonies became more and more excruciating.

There came a night, however, when after Nurse Gordon had finished with him and gone, Doria did not come at once. It was her custom to lock the front door on the departed nurse, so that they could feel themselves secure from intrusion, and then bring the "port lights" and "danger signals" and all the other materials for an enchanting little orgy on the bedspread. But tonight, though Pam heard the locking of the front door and the slur of his wife's silken draperies in the hall, she did not come immediately, and he was impatient. The rat at his vitals ate more hungrily, bit into him more cruelly than usual, and he wanted something potent to assuage that anguish. Doria's sloe gin would do no good tonight. He must have brandy.

And on the thought he dragged himself out of bed, en route for the dining room where he knew brandy to be. It did not take long to cross the drawing room, then the hall, to where the dining room stood open and lighted up. But when he reached the doorway the sight that presented itself kept him standing, silent and motionless.

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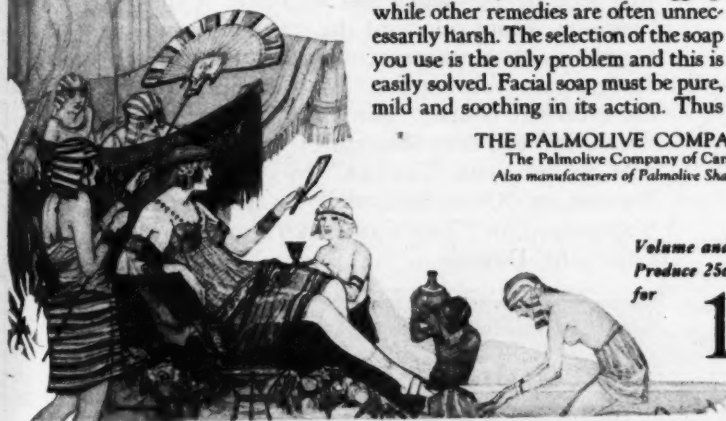
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tumblerful of sloe gin—he no longer took it from liqueur glasses—to the light, and letting fall slowly into it, drop by drop, a glorious colored liquid from a little glass bottle. Each drop as it fell between the glass and the light gleamed like a molten rose-red ruby. But the whole performance—the liquid—the color—the little bottle—her concentration—filled Pam with astonishment.

"What on earth? Doria!"

As if the sound of his voice struck her like lightning, her hands fell to her sides, glass and bottle went splintering to the floor, and down her gown, over the carpet everywhere, splashed and spread bright, vivid stains. Strangest of all was her face, riven as if by shock into a mask of terror and surprise, the stiff lips drawn back like

those of a panicked animal. Pam Heseltine did not recognize this woman. She was a stranger to him.

"Doria!" he repeated, in a sort of horror.

"What do you want?" she mouthed at him. "You frightened me—you startled me horribly. What do you want?" She stared with hostile eyes, as if he had no right in his own dining room.

"I came for brandy," he said dryly. "I am feeling infernally ill."

She searched his face at that, with a wizened, piercing glance. But already the fearful expression of terror was passing, her features had begun to resume their usual soft beguiling beauty, when suddenly her attention returned to the stains on her wrap, the litter of broken glass

about the carpet, and cold fury seemed to rush back to her face and out of her eyes towards him like a torrent.

"What a fool you are!" she cried bitterly, vehemently, as if she could have struck him to earth. Bitterness crept into him too, the coldness of ice round his heart, the old sardonic smile back to his lips. This at least was a Doria he knew well! No stranger here!

"I dare say I am!" he agreed curtly. "That doesn't prevent me from needing brandy, however."

He walked past her to the sideboard, took the decanter, poured himself out a large amount of liquor and drank it neat. When he turned to go back to his room Doria had gone, and he saw no more of her that night.

The climax of "The Garden of Peril" is without question one of the most powerful and revealing studies in character that Cynthia Stockley has ever written. You will not want to miss the last instalment—COSMOPOLITAN for June, on sale at all news stands May tenth

Mercy

(Continued from page 27)

stood freshly humbled by such Christian magnanimity. They could only wring the hands of the two, muttering incoherently their thanks.

As he walked away, Walton was thinking: He had wronged two women deeply, irreparably; and now two other women, who knew the secret of this wrongdoing, had agreed to keep it. And they did.

But there was a man—husband or brother or some sort of male relative of these two women—who had also lived in the little hamlet of A—; and in an unfortunate

moment he went one Sunday to the Robert N. Walton Bible Class. He came away vowing that he would never go there again; whereupon, in the natural course, after one intervening Sunday, Hollis Gant, a follow-up man from that highly organized class, came seeking him.

Piqued by the refusal either to come again or to give a reason therefor, young Gant persisted to the point of irritating this man who had once resided in the little Hamlet of A—. Angrily he came back with a story, attested by evidence, that

staggered Hollis Gant completely. When he had assimilated it somewhat, his anger rose—not against the informer but against the minister who had so deceived him, and not him only.

Hollis Gant was a zealot by nature. Consulting no one, he dashed off a letter to this Reverend Robert N. Walton *alias* Wills, notifying him that he was found out and that if he did not stand up and tell the Bible class next Sunday morning exactly who and what he was, there were those that would.

How the city in which Walton lived learned of his past, and what they did thereafter, makes the conclusion of this extraordinary fact story next month

The Lone Wolf Returns

(Continued from page 82)

generously you play into my hands. You confess you employed Pagan to drug me and Mallison to commit a burglary in an attempt to fasten the crime on me—you own your complicity in an even fouler job of blackmail 'framed,' as you would say, for Mrs. McFee—and now you add the capstone!"

Lanyard checked, then called: "Are you there, Mrs. McFee?"

The portières parted that closed the doorway to the drawing room; Folly entered and halted, her slight figure now decorously clothed but drawn up to the full of its inches and from the crown of the dainty head to the tips of silken slippers tense with contempt, from whose fire, ablaze in her eyes, Morpew had the grace to cringe.

"And now, before this witness," Lanyard pursued, "you add a threat against my life. It's more than I hoped for, Morpew, all I need to insure me a sound night's sleep. If I don't wake up from it unharmed, Mrs. McFee will know what to do. Must you go? Soames, no doubt, is waiting to show you out. But if you'd rather I gave you a lift with my foot—"

Morpew gave an incoherent bellow, lunged blindly to the door, threw it open and himself through to the hall. The very

floor of the house itself quaked with the pounding of his feet as he stampeded for open air. The street door banged like thunder while Lanyard stood laughing into Folly's eyes.

CHAPTER XII

BUT Lanyard was one who had learned how to laugh without losing sight of graver matters. So now the surface of his mood alone chimed with Folly's delight in the confusion he had meted out to Morpew; his thoughts were all a ferment with perception of the worth of every instant lost to his first duty, which was straightway to put himself beyond the range of Morpew's exacerbated malice.

Yet he was hardly so concerned with the more serious as to be blind to his closer peril, the glow that warmed Folly's countenance for him beneath the bright ripples of her glee; and in its unmistakable kindness read but one more reason why he must let nothing stand in the way of his prompt going.

The thought took him quickly to the table; he was lifting a hand to the switch of the lamp when Folly caught his arm, both her hands staying him with a gesture as gentle but as importunate as the clasp of tendrils.

"You're wonderful!" she declared in a breath, looking up with round eyes from which mirth had been swift to ebb, "marvellous, the way you managed him, twisted him round your little finger and made him own up to everything! And I'd always considered Morphy a sort of superman, so wise and calm and strong!"

"Never reproach yourself for that," Lanyard replied with a twinkle. "I too was taken in till he made it worth my while to call his bluff. But we must not forget all men are much alike: Morpew will respect me only so long as he fails to find a way to call mine. My one hope is to keep him at a distance—how do you say, over here?—to keep him guessing."

But the young woman wasn't so cheaply to be cheated out of her new-found luxury of hero worship; the dainty dark head dissented vigorously. "Why, Morphy hasn't a chance! you're equal to a dozen of him any day—and as many more Mallisons and Peter Pagans thrown in for good measure. Don't I know? Haven't you proved it here tonight?"

"The night is still young," Lanyard gravely reminded her. "It may tell another tale if Morpew's crew can contrive to lay hands on me before morning."

"After he'd threatened you in front of

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me? Nonsense—he simply wouldn't dare—just as you told him."

"My bluff. Not that I mean to give him any opportunity to prove it that. But I will need to move quickly, none the less . . ."

The hint he gave of a desire to disengage her hands got little encouragement; indeed their hold tightened while she mocked his professions with eyes of disturbing admiration and derisive lips: "You're not afraid!"

"But I assure you I am profoundly afraid. I don't say Morpheu would be flattered, but I fancy he'd feel far less a fool if he knew how thoroughly I am afraid of him. For we may be sure of one thing; in the event of my becoming an early victim of some curious accident, Morpheu's hand would never show. He's not the thundering scoundrel I thought him, but he's far too clever notwithstanding to order a misfortune for me that could possibly be traced to his management. So you see—with permission—I really must be going."

"But where, to be safer?"

Lanyard's expression took on a deeper shade of patience. "Time enough to think about that when I've called at my rooms to collect some belongings."

"But"—Folly held fast to his arm, with a little frown of solicitude to excuse her persistence—"if you feel so sure Morpheu means mischief—"

"Do you need more proof than you've had tonight?"

"Then surely he'll have set somebody to watch the house already!"

"The front of it, yes. Precisely why I'm anxious to get away before he can set spies to guard the rear. If you have no objection, I shall leave by one of these windows after putting out the lamp."

"But why?" Folly adorably pouted.

"You're safe enough here."

"Madame will forgive if I make so bold as to question that." She let fall her lovely lashes to deny the meaning that informed Lanyard's smile; but still held on. "And every minute I linger makes the danger outside more real."

"Then . . . don't leave at all . . ."

"Madame is generous to a fault. She forgets the world is never broad-minded. There are the servants to be considered, the neighbors—"

"A lot I care what people think; it's you I'm thinking of!"

Suffused with facile emotion, the face at Lanyard's shoulder was that of an exquisite and ingenuous child, vibrant with glad recognition of a world whose wonder and beauty had till that moment been all unsuspected. And the worst of it was, she knew it . . . No; the real worst of it was that it wasn't art, it wasn't put on, she wasn't coquetting; actually she was stirred to the depths of her being and meant, with all of her, every lovely nuance of her looks. Even Lanyard knew an instant when nothing in life seemed more desirable than those lambent eyes and the yielding mouth whose lips trembled with her hastened breathing . . . His for the taking!

But an instant only; in another he got himself in hand again and steeled his heart to cruel kindness. It went against nature to hurt her; but the hurt would not bite deep, its tonic pang would leave no scar. Not for the first time did life now give him proof of the readiness of a nature

emotionally shallow and impressionable to succumb to the glamour of his ill fame as a romantic rogue.

"Madame," said he with genuine reluctance, "would be so much wiser to think first always of herself."

She countered sharply, with a rebellious face: "But I can't help it—can I?—if it's you I must think of first."

"Nor can I help it," he said gently, "if I must always think first of another."

Folly's breathing checked with a sharp little hiss, she released Lanyard's arm and stepped back a pace, coloring but—strangely enough—not in anger.

"Oh!" she cried; and added with a half smile of whimsical self-reproach: "I'd forgotten. So it's true, what Liane told me." She accepted a slow inclination of Lanyard's head, gave a small wistful sigh. "I suppose she must be very beautiful . . . Won't you tell me what she is like?"

"Some day, perhaps," Lanyard vaguely agreed . . . "If you let me live to see another."

"I!"

"There's practically no danger if I may be permitted to say good night without more delay."

"I presume you must . . ." Folly shook her head, with a smile that broke in ruefulness but radiated in unaffected amusement at her own expense. "What a silly you must think me, a sentimental little ninny! No—don't deny it, because you're quite right. So that's that—and what must be, must. Many thanks for my emeralds, Monsieur the Lone Wolf, and"—she dropped him a mischievous courtesy—"more for my lesson! And so—good night."

He waited with intention till, in a gesture of charming petulance, a hand fluttered into his.

"Good night, my dear," Folly murmured tenderly as he bent his lips to her hand, "good by!"

Straightening up, Lanyard turned off the light.

CHAPTER XIII

SOME time after four o'clock the brought Sam, curbed overlong to pace sedately the interlacing mazes of the Bronx, gave a little start and shudder of pleasure to find itself at last heading into open country, with a soft deep purr crescendo flirled the dust of White Plains from its tires and sped away, *ventre-à-terre*, upon the highway which, skirting the eastern shores of the Kensico Reservoir, wanders with such a luring, random air the lake country of Westchester.

That day, true to the type of those that render autumn in the northern states the fairest season of the four, had been luminous of sky and languorous with reminiscent warmth. But now, as in a field of pastel tinting ineffably pellucid its sun dipped low to hills whose shadows like vast purple wraiths crept sluggishly across the valleys and their embayed waters, small lakes as still and bright and bleakly blue as plaques of polished steel—now as the dim haze of Indian Summer took on shades of lilac ever deeper and more tender, blotted up all distances and robbed the wooded hillsides of their flaming splendor, premonitions of evening chill lent tang to air aromatic with incense of dead leaves a-smoulder in uncounted pyres.



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—The Ballad of Reading Gaol

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In the body of the car Lanyard leaned forward and offered to put up the windows. Eve de Montalais gave a slight sign of dissent. "I like it better so, I love this air—if it's not too cold for you, my Michael."

He smiled a negative, and taking the rug from its rail made her snug in it. She lifted her eyes to his in lovely acknowledgment and, emboldened by the closing dusk and the loneliness of that little traveled way, nestled nearer, cheek to his shoulder.

Thus, pensive with the gentle melancholy distilled by that hour of dying beauty, symbolic of the cruel haste with which all beauty passes, the lovers sat a time in silence; so, for that matter, they had, barring a few brief interludes of gossip upon indifferent topics, ever since leaving New York; not that either had too little to say . . .

"Michael: tell me you are happy."

He had to bend his head to hear that whisper, her lips brushed his cheek with a caress so fugitive and light they might have been a moth's fluttering wings.

"Never so happy, Eve."

"Tell me it shall be always so with us. Surely we can make it so . . ."

For all answer she had the tightened pressure of his arm; and, a little chilled with disappointment, she said no more until, after several minutes, Lanyard was moved to wonder aloud: "This country is all strange to my eyes. Where are you taking me?"

"To a far away place I sincerely hope you'll like."

"How should I not, seeing it is your choice?"

"A little old inn, Michael, tucked away in the loneliest hills. We can be quiet there, and talk."

"Talk?" Lanyard made a sad stab at humor to divert her. "Is it kind to encourage my besetting vice?"

"I think," Eve answered, "you have something to tell me tonight."

"But you know it already," he parried poorly in his deep disquietude. "I think you have heard too often what I have to tell you."

As if he hadn't spoken, as if involuntarily giving her heart voice, in a curiously remote tone Eve replied: "We must not part."

Again Lanyard dared not trust his tongue. . .

The afterglow, pulsing through a hundred changes, faded, fainter and contracted, till a long clear pool of emerald alone defined the foot of the sky, the profile of those hills within whose pleats night hung already close and breathless. Through its dark, across gulfs unguessable, lost lights winked, beaconing unknown heights. And the spreading surfaces of still water on every hand, so thickly shadowed as to be more felt than seen, grew wan by degrees with the shine of stars.

Smartly tooled, with the sureness of a swallow's flight the car pursued its fan of yellow light over the intricate meander of the road, its windings, dips and soarings, while ever and again a bend ahead or the summit of some sharp ascent would take sudden shape in a sheen of spectral blue, heralding the advent of twin minor moons which, bearing down upon the brougham with a startling show of destructive mania, would pass harmlessly in a roaring rush; or else some fleeting eye, crimson with anger, would be raised and everhauled and

swept astern, metamorphosed into headlights of blank glare rocking in feebly furious emulation of that headlong pace.

The buffeting air grew colder and yet more cold; but neither the man nor the woman minded. His love warm in his arms, Lanyard was trying to live for the moment only, to be oblivious of yesterday and reckless of tomorrow. He failed; impossible for one who loved so well to be deaf to the murmurings of his heart against that resolution which, shaped by his soberest judgment, firmed by his will, bade him put love away tonight forevermore, lest harm befall her in whom love had its source, and whole existence. This evening together must be the last: so he was fixed in his intention. But how tell Eve, how make her understand, win her consent and concurrence?

"Why do you look behind so often, Michael?"

"A bad old habit," Lanyard lied lightly, cursing his stupidity for having let her remark that symptom of a mind perturbed, "a souvenir of bad old days. Jungle folk, they say, never are wholly reclaimed from jungle ways; the instincts of the chase are always cropping up in our least considered actions, we are forever conceiving ourselves, as of old, hunter and hunted in the same skin."

"My poor Michael!" The woman laughed indulgently. "Does he imagine he is deceiving somebody?"

"But do you not forget?"—he snatched at a straw—"that there are motor cycle police abroad, even on these back country roads? Naturally one keeps an eye out for them . . ."

For all that Eve had contrived again to put him out of countenance, there had been color of truth in his equivocation which had failed; Lanyard's constant vigilance was more instinctive than excited by any indication either that the car was being trailed or that the riddle of his whereabouts was one of any present interest to those whose malevolence he had sound reason to beware of. Since the previous night nothing had happened to show that Morpheus had succeeded in having the devious way traced which Lanyard had taken en route from Folly's residence to his own lodgings and then on to the modest hotel which ultimately had provided him with a bed, or to contradict the inference that Morpheus had decided to profit by his lesson in humility and count it cheap at its cost. . . . Than which last Lanyard could not readily imagine any hope more infatuate; life had taught him too well to know the temper of the Morpheus breed . . .

It was true, however, that he had been at some pains all day to keep himself rather thoroughly insulated against news from Morpheus's side. The story of the recovered emeralds had "broken" too late for the morning papers; and although Crane beyond doubt could have supplied helpful information, Lanyard had been studious to remain lost to that one, too, entertaining as he did not the remotest wish to be haled into court as a witness against Mallison.

Not that conscience reproached for the ruse which had brought about the arrest of the dancing man as the thief of night before last. Even though Mallison might in point of simple fact be innocent of that crime, the severest sentence to which he was liable, if convicted, would be mild

punishment for the part he had played in the conspiracy to blackmail Folly McFee; Lanyard cheerfully would have lied the man into a life term in requital for that alone, and with as much confidence would have looked to find the perjury recorded to his credit in the Judgment Book on the Day of the Last Accounting.

But if by any chance Mallison should manage to set up a convincing alibi, or even to leave his guilt or innocence an open question in Lanyard's mind, the doubt would find fresh force that would not down, new plausibility would clothe the fear that the Lone Wolf might have usurped dominion over the body and soul from which the mind of Michael Lanyard temporarily had been dispossessed, long enough to commit them anew to ancient ways of knavery.

In this respect at least Lanyard was constrained to own himself a moral coward: he shrank from any test that might result in proving him, though all unwittingly, apostate to the regeneration upon which Eve's faith in him was established; he held it torture intolerable to think that he might, in the last assay, be found wanting in the one condition that gave him a shadow of claim upon her consideration.

And with these thoughts a memory of later gathering lurked in the background of his reverie, a presence terrible and importunate . . . like a shape of horror stalking at the shoulder of one who treads the echoing emptiness of a house called haunted . . .

Opportunely that specter was for the time being banished by Eve's announcement: "We are nearly there."

Its pace growing momentarily more moderate, the car approached the mouth of a byway where a roadside sign seared the night with letters of fire: Inn of the Green Woods.

Wheeling headlights raked aisles of pines through which the road serpentine at a sharp grade upward, leading the brougham out at last into a hilltop clearing where a rambling structure sat, of undressed logs, with deep verandas and windows of ingratiating warmth. To one side cars of earlier arrivals were parked.

Indoors an atmosphere neither too rude nor too Sybaritic made good Eve's recommendation; a discriminating taste had imposed the refinements of today upon yesterday's primitive accommodations. A great fireplace of field stone nursed a blaze of logs grateful to flesh nipped by the night air.

Tables dressed in good taste and not closely ranked gained an additional effect of privacy through low fences of rustic work setting them apart. Of these a number were in use when Eve de Montalais and Lanyard were conducted to one which waited in a corner, ready laid for them.

Not long after, still another party turned up and was assigned a near-by table. Lanyard accorded its four members the same shrewd but covert study which he had already wasted on their predecessors, perceiving in these newcomers, as well, nothing to re-excite a disposition to distrust mankind *in toto* which was yielding rapidly to the triple flattery of the delightful and devoted presence at his elbow, a dinner quite admirable of its kind, and a wine finer than any a discriminating palate had relished in many a moon; influences



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so powerful as to compensate even his forebodings of the reckoning to come. Some acquaintance with the ways of road houses like this, broad-minded enough to produce a bottle of sound Burgundy without so much as a gesture of deference to the law of the land, lent strength to the apprehension that, when Lanyard had settled his score, he would bear away from the Inn of the Green Woods a purse as thin as his expectation of a dull old age. And never a hope of being able to replenish it before the next quarterly remittance day, two months away!

A thought to drive a man in love distracted who had no other worries tearing at his heart. With all his might Lanyard tried to put it out of mind lest it shadow his countenance too evidently to be misread. Eve must never be permitted to suspect that pride of penury had anything to do with his decision to make an end tonight of relations which, however heart-rending the wrench that must sever them, love worthy of its inspiration might no longer sanction.

Either the wine or his anxiety to seem at ease loosened his tongue and enlivened his wit; Lanyard found himself talking with a humor and a verve that enabled him to ride cavalierly over awareness of the look in the eyes so constant to his, a look in which perplexity and patience too constantly found place. But all the while he was half consciously preparing for the challenge which came when, with the room to themselves but for one other party of diners, they lingered over coffee and cigarettes before the fire.

"When are you going to tell me, Michael, what is on your mind?"

Words quietly spoken, like drops of cool water added one by one to the seething contents of a test tube, precipitating the elements of the situation between them. And he who had no small conceit in the readiness with which he was wont to deal with others, experienced now a moment of mental flurry, lost the thread of his argument and stared helplessly into those smiling but intent eyes. She was finished, he had to recognize, with forbearance; nevertheless he could not but make one last attempt to stave off the inevitable . . .

"What should there be, Eve, more than you know?"

"Do you really want me to believe you have forgotten our talk the other night, at the Ritz, the discussion you yourself started and that, at my request, we didn't finish?"

"Must you recall that now?"

"It isn't like you, Michael, to palter . . . We aren't children any more, my dear; you know my mind and I know yours—at least in part. I love you and want you for my husband; but you won't ask me to marry you, of your own volition you have raised up the ghost of your dead yesterday to stand between us and"—she had a smile for the verbal extravagance—"forbid the banns. But I have refused to be frightened by bogeys. With that we left the question open, night before last; since when something has happened." She nodded her head gravely: "Tell me, Michael . . ."

"What makes you think . . ."

"You love me too well to distress me needlessly by leaving a matter so vital in suspense. If nothing had occurred to



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make you hesitate, for fear of giving me pain, you wouldn't be trying so hard to talk about everything imaginable but the one thing that counts."

He gave his head a tormented shake. "Is it not enough that, the more I weigh the circumstances, the more sure I feel I am right?—the only way to be fair to you is to take myself out of your life."

"But it seems to me I am the one to say what is fair or unfair to me. After all, my happiness is at stake."

"Not more than mine."

"Much more than yours. You are selfish, Michael—not meaning to be, but because you would hurt me to my very heart to spare yourself self-reproach, if ever after our marriage anything should come out of the past to trouble us. As if anything matters to a woman who loves so long as she is well loved in return!"

"You make me figure in an unkind light . . ."

"I am using every weapon I can find in my fight with life for the right to be happy."

"I would break my own heart rather than cause you an instant's unhappiness . . ."

"You think so, dear. But you at least would have the memory of an act of renunciation to console you—you could say to yourself: I suffer, but for her sake. For me there would be only the knowledge that I had been cheated out of my due. I have the right to claim more of life than it has given me . . ."

The voice of melancholy music faltered, then resumed: "The war took my husband from me before I was old enough to know what love could mean. Now, long after, I have found a greater love—and I am required to give it up solely because you are afraid somebody may some day tell me what I already know, that once upon a time you were a little lower than the angels!"

To avoid the accusation of her look, Lanyard stared blindly into the fire.

"I am not good enough for such a love as yours, Eve."

"Perhaps no one of us is good enough for love. Yet we can try to be, by serving . . ."

Lanyard hung his head; and in accents of quiet conviction Eve de Montalais pursued: "Something has happened. I thought so, from your manner this afternoon; now I am sure. It isn't that you have ceased to care for me—"

"You know it is not that."

"What, then? It must be something quite as serious; you couldn't hold out against me as you do if it were anything less. Michael—you can't refuse to tell me now."

He made a sign of submission combined with a plea for time in which to assort his thoughts. Indisputably nothing less than the truth would satisfy her; but it might be that something less than the whole truth, so sure to terrify her, would serve.

And while he sat turning the matter over in his mind, their waiter approached.

"Monsieur Paul Martin?" the man inquired, with an execrable attempt to give the words a French inflection.

In his abstraction, Lanyard signified an impatient negative, but Eve de Montalais was less thick-witted.

"What name?" she inquired quickly.

"Paul Martin, ma'am. He's wanted



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on the telephone—a long distance call."

"From New York?"

"I don't know, ma'am, the party didn't say, just asked for Monsieur Paul Martin—party with a sort of a foreign accent, French, I guess."

Eve looked sharply to Lanyard: "It is for you—you must answer it." He responded with a puzzled nod, though his memory needed no more jogging. But was it possible? he wondered as he followed the waiter to the telephone booth in the office of the inn. Aside from Eve and himself, that alias of a day long past was known to but three people in the world; and of these one was in London and one in Paris, at last accounts, while the third was in New York.

But if Liane knew where he was dining, so far away from town, she must have been informed by somebody who had followed him without his knowledge!

Not the voice of Liane, but a man's saluted him above the humming of the long distance wire, a man's voice with, as the waiter had indicated, a strong tinge of nasal French.

"Monsieur Paul Martin?"

"Yes. Who wants him?"

"I am spikin' for 'is sister. Ees this Monsieur Martin spikin'?"

It was Liane who for her own ends had nominated herself the sister of Monsieur Paul Martin, one day in Paris long ago.

Lanyard answered "Yes."

"Pardon, monsieur—your sister ees too beesy now to telephone you 'erself. She have ask me to geev you a message."

"Monsieur is most amiable," Lanyard replied in French. "What is the message, please?"

"Prenez garde!"

"What did you say?"

"Bon soir."

"Hello! hello!"

But Lanyard worried the hook in vain; the other had hung up, the wire was closed.

Prenez garde—take care!

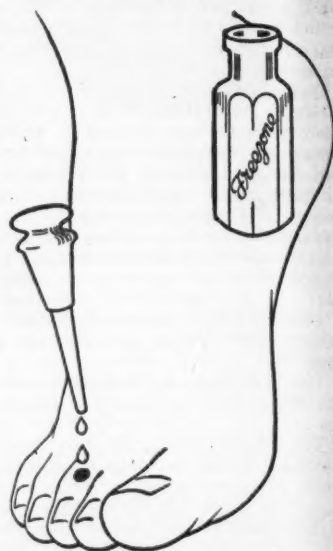
CHAPTER XIV

LANYARD took back to Eve by the fire the most dégagé manner he could manage, a manner of leisured good humor that wasn't all put on at the prompting of *amour propre*, that was assumed less in hope of hoodwinking her ingenious intuitions than for the benefit of their fellow guests, if so be it these entertained any latent interest in the reactions of Michael Lanyard to a long distance call for "Monsieur Paul Martin," and that dissembled better than he believed a sense of discouragement the most devastating he had ever known—not on his account alone so much as that he was not alone.

The quandary in which he found himself trapped, now that his eyes had been opened by that singular admonition from out of the night, at once cryptic and only too intelligible, was one that defied and, what was worse, promised persistent defiance to the utmost of his resources, from which extrication with credit to himself—or, if it came to that, with his life—seemed out of the question. Not that he put life first; his solicitude was nine parts unselfish, his disheartenment the fruit of inability to hit on any pretext that conceivably would induce Eve to part then and there with one whose company had all at once become

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equivalent to a pistol trained on her heart point-blank—and with a finger both pitiless and anonymous trembling on the trigger.

A strong statement, but one that by no means painted their predicament an exaggerated black. His "sister" had never played her confreres false or resorted to subterfuge so subtle to put "Monsieur Paul Martin" on his guard against a nebulous or trifling menace. Liane owed Lanyard much on an old score; she would have been faithless to the code of her kind had she, having definite foreknowledge of it, permitted so good a friend to go blindly to meet the fate prepared for him, whatever that might be.

Such women are nevertheless jealous wardens of their own welfare; it had required perception of a peril to Lanyard immediate and desperate to work Liane up to the point of chancing the resentment of Morpew and his crew should her treachery ever transpire. Witness the extravagant pains she had taken to disguise her hand.

No; it would never do to underprize this proof of good will or to read in Liane's warning any spirit but one of the most earnest anxiety. Taken as she had unquestionably intended it, her "prenez garde" decoded somewhat to this effect: You are sadly self-deluded, my friend, if you think Morpew resigned to stomach defeat at your hands, or that you have succeeded in keeping your movements hidden from him; he has never for an instant lost sight either of you or of his revenge, he is playing you as heartlessly as an angler plays a trout, gaff in hand—you must go warily to cheat its barbs.

The dilemma thus exposed was appalling; a clean breast of all he had been trying to hide from her was unavoidable if he hoped to make Eve comprehend why he held it imperative to seek each a separate way back to New York; whereas, once she did grasp the fact that danger threatened him, she would surely refuse to let him risk it alone. Women of her rare stamp are never readily dismayed or disposed to think first of themselves if a frown of physical peril shadow also one by whom their affections have been engaged. . . . Regard the spirit that poised Eve then in that juncture, awaiting his return with a countenance as composed as it was fair, with eyes unclouded by any confession of impatience or misgivings.

"Sorry I was so long," Lanyard said, with intention to be heard across the dining room. "I stopped to pay the bill and order the car brought round. If you don't mind . . ."

"It's quite time," Eve amiably agreed, "if we're to get home at any respectable hour."

He resumed his chair before the fire and made business with cigarette case and a match to cover sidelong scrutiny of the four patrons who had come in so soon after his arrival with Eve, and who remained still at table, dawdling with dessert. But he couldn't see that his announcement had meant anything to these . . .

The one woman of their number was a creature of strapping comeliness, whose hail-fellow swagger was brazen, that had been piquant in the flapper she heavily aped; while the men were such as would hardly have won a second glance on any ordinary occasion, types of the American



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bourgeois case-hardened by "good business," clothed in a weirdly uniform mode of smartness, something stale with over-feeding and drinking and fondling, wanting stimulation yet inclined to grow causelessly arrogant in their cups. But Lanyard was too well learned in the ways of urban America not to know that its Apaches seldom if ever conform to the cliché of the cinema when it turns its cyclopædic if gullible eye on what it knows as denizens of the underworld. The gunman of New York is blown with pride of caste; for all that, he isn't keen on bidding for the attention of the police by sporting the conventionalized make-up of a suspicious character—he far prefers to pass in a crowd as a simple man in the street normally addicted to the machine-made "clothing of distinction" of the magazine advertisements. The fact, then, that these three were apparently nobodies in particular minding their own business didn't necessarily mean that Lanyard could afford to dismiss them from his calculations.

Neither did he, careful though he was to give no excuse for the suspicion that he had a thought to spare from the woman at his side.

"There is no one like you," he was saying in gallant repayment of her steadfast and demanding attention: "the loveliest woman that ever breathed, the most adorably patient . . ."

"How little you know me," she calmly commented, unflattered, so undistracted, "at least, if you expect me to believe you think me patient. Then your message was important?"

"Very," the man admitted gravely; the time was by when fencing were anything but waste of time. "I am worried about getting you back to town . . ."

"So it was Mademoiselle Delorme!"

"That only goes to show," Lanyard remarked obliquely, "one should never tell you anything one expects you to forget."

"I have forgotten nothing you have ever told me about yourself—nothing, at least, that had to do with another woman's affection for you."

"Yet you are incapable of jealousy."

"Still, I am very greedy. I don't like sharing even the least of your thoughts with any other woman."

"Oh!" he laughed; "but Liane isn't a woman, except professionally."

"You are tantalizing me all the same when you don't tell me what she had to say—and how in heaven's name she guessed you were dining here—and why she resurged that old *nom de guerre* instead of calling for you by your right name."

"I'm afraid Liane didn't guess; I suspect somebody who knew told her we had stopped here to dine—"

The teasing half smile with which Eve had been regarding her lover was erased. "You think we were followed—"

"How else could they have known?"

"They?"

"Who informed Liane?"

"But why should she have harked back to 'Paul Martin'?"

"I fancy her reason for that is implicit in Liane's message, a brief one—delivered, if it matters, by a stranger's tongue—'prenez garde.'"

Eve nodded thoughtful confirmation of a private conjecture. "You are in some danger?" Not at all deceived by the shrug that sought to depreciate the weight of that



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term, she glanced quickly to and from the little party that was, just then, loudly making merry at its table across the room. In response, another movement of Lanyard's shoulders disclaimed intelligence: "Perhaps . . . Who knows?"

"You must tell me everything . . ."

"I know; but it's a fairish yarn, and the car ought to be here any minute—I'll hardly have time before we leave. So let me first of all throw myself upon your mercy, Eve, beg you to trust me."

"But you know I do, in every way."

"I mean, trust me to know what is best . . ."

Analysis of this ambiguity knitted a speculative frown. "You're going to ask something of me I won't want to do."

"It is dangerous for us to attempt the journey back to New York together."

"Dangerous," Eve objected, "isn't definite enough . . ."

"It would appear that one whom I have recently been obliged to humiliate plans to pay me out tonight. He will fail—trust me for that—but I shall be more free to make him see the error of his ways if I can feel sure the harm meant for me can't by mischance be visited upon you instead."

"Ah, no, my friend! You don't seriously think I will consent . . ."

"You would not hesitate if I could only make it clear how much better my chances would be."

"I'm afraid it's a hopeless task, but"—she made her smile provoking—"suppose you try."

"Conceive, then"—Lanyard spoke deliberately in an endeavor to put the business in a nutshell—"that after leaving you night before last I was thrown in with one who chose to declare war on me for his own ends—"

"The Sultan of Loot!"

"Why try to keep anything from you?"

"You forget, I too had a premonition concerning that creature. Who is he?"

"I can more easily tell you what he is. He styles himself Morphew and the Tenderloin calls him King of the Bootleggers—justly, one is told. In addition, he nurses a penchant for having a finger in every lawless pie. To discipline me, that night, he caused the loot of a burglary to be hidden in my pockets while I lay in a stupor, drugged by his direction, then saw to it that I was suspected of having committed the theft."

"Oh, no!" the woman interrupted involuntarily, revolted by the bare suggestion of such enormity.

"Or else—I must believe I stole the jewels myself in instinctive reversion to old ways, drink having abolished the inhibitions of the new."

"Never!"

"I do not know," Lanyard confessed with a wry face. "There are circumstances which make me uneasy . . . I do not know!"

"How can you even suggest such a thing!"

"Let me tell you . . . Last night I visited—or revisited!—the house from which the jewels had been stolen, meaning secretly to restore them. This I managed. I was even more fortunate in being able to bring about the arrest of one of Morphew's lot as the burglar of fact—which the fellow may well have been. Finally, to confuse pursuit, I quitted the house by the way the burglar had taken the night before—"

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let myself out of a back window to the roof
of an extension, dropped down to a back-
yard, scaled a board fence and stole
through an excavation for a new building
to the street beyond. Eve . . .

Lanyard faltered and worked his hands
together, his features wrung, haunted eyes
reflecting the enigma of the embers which
held their stare. And with a gesture of
quick sympathy, the woman sat forward
to screen him. But these others seemed to
be completely preoccupied with their own
hilarious concerns; and the racket of con-
genial voices they raised must have pre-
vented their overhearing anything of
Lanyard's confession when at length he
resumed.

"Up to that time," he said slowly, "I
had hardly questioned the assumption that
Morpheus deliberately had schemed to
victimize me . . . But then, while I was
creeping away from that house, quite
literally like a thief in the night—once upon
the roof, again when I stood in the kitchen
yard, looking back at the blank rear win-
dows, and yet again while stumbling
through that foundation pit beyond the
fence—at every stage of that journey I
knew a feeling as of doing something I had
done before, repeating the identical ges-
tures I had employed at another time, upon
an occasion strangely forgotten . . ."

"Well?" the woman prompted in cool
amusement.

"Well!"—his wistful smile sketched a
graphic expression of bewilderment—
"I do not know, perhaps it was true,
perhaps . . ."

Careless whether they were observed, the
woman leaned forward and lightly covered
one of his hands with her own. "Poor
dear!" she cried, with a thrill of fond
laughter, "to let himself be so tormented
by a sensation such as everybody has at
times!"

"Everybody?" he iterated, in a stare.

"It happens to us all—has it never hap-
pened to you before?—a phenomenon so
common the psychologists have a special
name for it. What do they call it? Reflex
memory? Something of the sort, I forget
. . . One only needs a new scene and a
mood especially susceptible to impressions
of strangeness or beauty—and all at once
one feels quite sure one has visited that
very spot in some previous existence. Pre-
cisely that happened to you last night, my
Michael, in your super-excited state of
mind, worried by ignorance of the truth
about the stolen property in your posses-
sion . . . Take my word for it!"

"You believe that?" he insisted. "Truly?"

"Truly, my dear."

"You don't think I could possibly—"

"Never—I know you better than you
do yourself." Eve gave his hand a com-
forting pressure, and sat back. "If you
let anything so absurd fret you another
instant I shall be very cross with you."

"You make me very happy," Lanyard
said. "It cost me something to tell
you . . ."

"I know!"

"I don't deserve such faith."

"But I don't consider you a good judge
of your own worth, dear. And now that I
understand the situation—you've made a
fool and an enemy of this man Morpheus,
and he's conspiring to be revenged—tell
me, what is it you have to propose about
returning to town?"

"I want you to let me find my way back

alone. I have consulted road maps and time tables posted in the office here. There's a train for New York from the nearest station"—Lanyard glanced at the watch on his wrist—"in about half an hour . . . Which reminds me, your driver is taking his time."

"Patience. He's forever tinkering with the motor—he'll be ready any minute. You were saying—"

"I want you to let me drop you at the railroad and take the train back to town, with your chauffeur for protection, while I go on in the car."

Undisguised derision honored this proposal. "But why should I, when it is you, not I, the Sultan of Loot is after? If the train can be considered safe, surely you're the one—"

"You forget, Morpheus's people will aim at your motorcar, believing me to be in it whether I am or not. If I should succeed in leaving it unobserved, they would still pursue the car. You can't ask me to expose you to a danger from which I turn tail."

"Then why shouldn't we both take the train?"

"It is what you Americans call an accommodation—stops at every station. If we should abandon your car to be found near the railroad, it would be too simple to have the train anticipated by telephone, boarded somewhere between here and New York and the two of us kept so closely watched we would have no chance . . ."

The woman's head described a sign of flat rejection, Lanyard's rueful recognition of an outcome foreseen.

"Impossible, my friend! I couldn't dream of leaving you to shift for yourself."

"But how else?"

"I have a saner scheme. Why not stop here for the night? The inn must have accommodations . . . You see!" Eve cried in laughing triumph, "you are trying to get rid of me when the truth is you need me. Two heads are better than one . . . But why shake yours so dourly?"

"I am afraid of your plan for more reasons than one. Daylight for our return will hardly be the same thing as accident insurance. If you give me my choice, I like darkness better."

"And your other reasons?"

"If I stop here overnight, where I am beyond much doubt under surveillance even now, I remain placed and give Morpheus just so much more time to close his net round me. And nothing I know of makes this inn a sanctuary or guarantees the bona fides of the management."

"You don't mean to say you think the people who run this place—"

"I have been taught to trust nobody at times like this. More than that, everybody knows most of these resorts in and about New York that openly flout the Prohibition Amendment are actively in league with if not actually owned by bootlegging interests. I will breathe more comfortably, I promise you, when—and if—we are permitted to go our way unhindered."

"Oh, but surely you exaggerate!"

"Possibly; it's not always a bad fault, by no means so bad as under-exaggeration when one's neck is concerned. However, it can't be long now before we know."

Seeing their waiter approach, Lanyard got up and took Eve's wrap from the back of her chair. But the natural expectation



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of word that the brougham was at the door suffered a blight even before the man spoke, by reason of the odd look with which he saluted Lanyard.

"Excuse me, Mr. Martin," he said with—or instinct was at fault—a tinge of mockery in his supple habit, "the manager's compliments, and he'd be much obliged if you'd step into the office a minute; he'd like to have a word with you."

"Indeed? What does the good man want?"

"If it's all the same to you, sir, it'd be better if you'd kindly talk with the boss."

"About what?"

"Well, sir," the waiter stammered, "I don't want to alarm the lady—something's happened."

Lanyard looked to Eve with lifting brows.

"If you will excuse me—"

"I don't think I will," Eve cheerfully replied, rising. "And I don't in the least mind being alarmed. I'm coming along."

With a formal bow of consent, Lanyard folded the wrap round her shoulders, then threw his coat over his arm and prepared to follow the waiter. But the latter was just then peremptorily hailed by the host of the remaining party with a demand for "the check"; so Lanyard and Eve proceeded to the little office unescorted, to find awaiting them a person of decent manners with an intelligent if at the moment somewhat harassed eye. There had been, he began, an unfortunate accident, he was more sorry than he could say that it had happened in his establishment . . .

"What sort of an accident?" Lanyard cut his apologies short with a touch of asperity.

"If you and your lady don't mind stepping this way, I'll show you . . ."

Ushered out to the night, they were conducted round the corner of the building to the space where, in the chilly glimmer of a belated moon, the brougham stood parked with the other motorcar; and, near the former, two men were stooping over something that rested motionless upon the packed earth, one of them focusing upon it the beam of an electric torch.

Lanyard touched Eve's arm, recommending her to wait aside, and with the manager joined the group round the supine body of their chauffeur.

The man lay in a limp sprawl, his face in that unflattering glare a congested crimson, the mouth slack and drooping, half closed lids showing only the whites of eyes rolled back, stertorous respiration fouling the sweet smell of the night—evidently no worse than dead drunk.

"I just don't know how he worked it to get like this," the manager was protesting. "It's dead against our rules to sell hootch to chauffeurs, and I'll sack the bird responsible for this if I have to bounce the whole staff to get rid of him. But that isn't any comfort to you, I guess."

"None," Lanyard curtly agreed.

"He was all right as long's he was sittin' in the chowfers' dinin' room," the man with the lamp volunteered. "You wouldn't have thought he'd had more'n a couple. But as soon as the cold air hit him he flopped like he'd been crowned. Funny . . ."

"No doubt you find it so."

"The only thing I can suggest, Mr. Martin," the manager put in, Lanyard

thought too eagerly, "is to lend you somebody to drive you back to New York. Ben here's a darn good driver, knows all the roads like a book."

"That's very good of you," Lanyard returned, with a warning eye for Eve. "We'll be glad to make it worth Ben's while, for neither of us can drive or has even a general idea of the roads. But first"—the toe of his boot stirred the body—"we would like to be sure this poor fool will get proper attention. I dare say you can give him a room."

"Of course, sir—and I'll phone for a doctor, if you say, though I don't think that ought to be necessary. This isn't any case of wood alcohol poisoning, there isn't a drop of bad liquor in the house—"

"I'm sure there isn't. All the same, what he had must have been wicked stuff. If you don't mind having him carried indoors, I'll make an examination myself—I have a limited amount of medical knowledge."

"You bet I will . . ."

Directed by the speaker, the underlings, with no noteworthy enthusiasm, surrendered the torch and their leisure, bent to lift the body of the drunkard by the legs and shoulders, and staggering with the weight of that inert lump, made crabwise progress toward the rear entrance to the inn, the manager following with the light while Lanyard turned back to Eve with a suggestion clearly articulated for the benefit of whatever ears might care to hear.

"If you'll make yourself comfortable in the car, madame, I promise I won't keep you waiting long."

"Thank you," Eve equably returned. "I don't mind waiting, and I do want to be sure that poor boy is in no real danger."

Lanyard offered Eve a hand to help her into the car; but the door he unlatched was one that admitted not to the body of the vehicle but to the front seat on the driver's right.

"Quick!" he urged in an undertone, and when Eve was in place, doubled round to the other side of the brougham.

But the manager was not napping. "Here now!" he remonstrated, jolted out of his vocational urbanity as he came running back. "Thought you said you couldn't—"

The moonlight silvered something in his hand which might or might not have been the darkened torch, and which Lanyard could not afford to give the benefit of a doubt. Standing on the running board, without the smallest compunction he planted a foot in the midriff of the manager so forcibly that the latter dropped whatever it was he had been holding and, with a yelp, doubled up.

Immediately settling into place behind the wheel, Lanyard released the emergency brake, with the result that the brougham, standing on a slight downgrade, began to move of its own weight even before he could locate the starting pedal. Muttering a prayer of thankfulness, he meshed the gears in third and swung the car into the downhill road. At the same time the two who had been carrying the chauffeur let their senseless burden drop and started in pursuit. One tripped over some inequality in the ground and plunged to his knees. The other gained the running board in a bound and aimed a blow at Lanyard's head. It went wide, and Lanyard's fist glanced upon the



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fellow's jaw with sufficient weight to dislodge him. Beating the air with frantic arms, he disappeared.

Fumbling for the switch with one hand, with the other Lanyard steered for the maw of the road through the woods. For a single instant more the inn, painted with pale lunar phosphorescence, stood out in high relief against its background of blurred forest, while with the tail of his eye Lanyard saw its front door of a sudden release a stream of saffron light. Somebody shouted in profane astonishment, somebody stumbled out upon the veranda and pelted toward the parking space. Then, between two heartbeats, Lanyard solved the secret of headlights and ignition, and the brougham, momentum sharply hastened, swept on into the pillared tunnel through the pines.

At first, hands that hadn't grasped a wheel in years had all they could do to hold the lurching fabric to a sharply declivitous and twisting path. Then the grade grew more moderate, the way less tortuous, and the car, obedient to its brakes, slipped gently past the fiery sign to the highway and turned its nose southwards.

"Well done!" Eve applauded. "Oh, well done!"

"Wait!" Lanyard prayed, with the man in mind who had sprinted from the lighted doorway toward the other car. "Physical fact to the contrary notwithstanding, we're not out of the woods yet."

His toe found the accelerator pedal, the motor responded with a mettlesome snort and a drumming drone that waxed apace. The car clove the night like a frightened cat.

After a mile or so of fast going on a road whose windings required for safe navigation a sure hand and eye, Lanyard felt confidence confirmed in his ability to handle the brougham with fair skill and extract from its motor the best it had to give. And when, before long, a rarely long stretch of straight road made a fair trial feasible, he coaxed the speedometer by degrees up to, then past the mark fifty, without feeling that he was tempting fate.

Toward the end of that dash, Eve, who had been keeping an eye on the road astern, reported it bare of pursuing headlights.

"Do you mean to try for that railroad?" she added.

"No—not now, not since things have turned out as they have."

"I am glad," she told him coolly. "This night is too lovely to be spoiled by traveling in a stuffy train."

"Is it?" he queried in grim humor.

"Do you not find it so, my Michael?"

"I find it damnably dangerous."

"And I find it, danger and all, divine."

But Lanyard drove in an obsession of fatality.

The road, a river of oxidized silver threading an upland world of purples and blacks in blended masses and ever and again opening up vistas of long valleys filled with mist like streams of milk, was a gantlet of deadly perils. In the blue bowl of the sky it bleached, the misshapen moon swung from side to side of the devious way like a grinning devil-mask. The vast stillness that dwelt upon the world beneath had brooding effect of beauty holding its breath in dread. Through that somehow abnormal hush the swaying bulk of the brougham bored like

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something wild of eye and mad with fear. The wind had an insane whine its flight created, and the incessant drum of its exhaust, echoing from the hard smooth surfaces it traversed, was reechoed by hills and woods and fields with a rumor as of tom-toms thrumming a bacchanal of death . . .

But to the woman who loved Lanyard it was all divine . . .

Summing up another survey of the road behind, she declared: "There is nothing. You have outwitted and distanced them."

"Have I?"

"Is there more to fear?"

"But everything."

"Even an open road?"

"Who can say what may lie in wait for us round the next bend?"

"What does it matter, so we go to meet it together?"

Neither daring to take his eyes from the streaming road nor knowing how to answer her, Lanyard gave only a groan.

"I fear nothing but to be parted from you. Promise we shall never part."

He could not promise . . .

"Michael!" the heartbreaking voice at his shoulder insisted, "why don't you answer me? Surely you can't still be thinking I will ever let you go?"

He contrived to say, almost explosively: "But I must."

"Ah, no, no, Michael! you couldn't hurt me so."

"Is not tonight enough to prove to you that no man who loved you truly could consent to expose you to such a life? It is my fate to love you too well . . ."

What the woman said to that was lost in the blast of a tire blown out on one of the front wheels. An instantaneous swerve toward a ditch by the roadside all but wrenched the wheel out of control and resulted in a wreck. As it was, frantic work averted disaster by the slenderest of scrapes. With locked brakes the brougham skidded drunkenly and rolled to a halt broadside to a bluff over across from the ditch.

With amazing self-command, Lanyard suffered never a syllable of a seething vocabulary to escape his lips as he unlatched the door and leaped down. An instant later Eve on her side alighted and came round to join him. Together they contemplated in silence the ruptured tire and the two good spares locked in their rack—and the key in the pocket of a chauffeur sleeping off his drink in the Inn of the Green Woods, fifteen miles or more away!

From contemplation of this bad business Lanyard turned to consider their position, and found it equally bad. The car stood as far off the road as it could be, but nevertheless somewhat blocking its narrow width, on the waist of an S bend, with a hillside blinding the approach on one hand, a wilderness of young forest on the other. And even as the thought formed that it would be well to move on at once, headlights illuminated the curve ahead, then swung into view, and a car coming from the direction of New York bore down at nothing less than forty miles an hour.

Lanyard had barely time to catch Eve by the arm and drag her out of its path, a maneuver which took them both to the side of the road bordered by the ditch.



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Simultaneously the bellow of an unmuffled exhaust told of the approach of another car from the opposite direction. When Lanyard first saw it, it was less than a hundred feet distant, moving at a terrific rate—and running without lights!

So that was why Eve had been able to detect no sign of pursuit . . .

The first car, forced by the stationary brougham to sheer to the wrong side of the road, loosed upon the night a blare of frenzy. Through this penetrated Eve's wail of terror. Lanyard swung to her like

a maniac, seized the woman and, exerting every ounce of the strength that was in him, caught her up bodily and flung her off the road, into the ditch.

Too late to save himself . . .

The moon, reeling in its blanched blue field, was a scimitar of white flame. It swooped down through the firmament as might the wrath of God. The world like a bomb exploded beneath his feet; a quivering mass of agony, he was hurled far and far into an everlasting abyss of night impenetrable . . .

Among all of COSMOPOLITAN's many readers, we do not believe there is one who could guess the outcome of Lanyard's accident. Try it, and then read the next instalment.

Isabel

(Continued from page 64)

drinking. Any girl who was able to take care of herself had a perfect right to drive till sunrise. Indeed, Isabel knew lots of girls who, if they did not motor all night after dances, certainly motored an hour or two. All these things they said, or rather Isabel said, again and again. And yet on those occasions they always planned it that General Valentine should think that Amy was staying with the Halls and that Miss Hall should think Isabel was staying with the Valentines.

Of all her men Amy seemed to like Jerry Kitchen the best . . . But in reality, Isabel knew, Amy liked much better—oh, very much better—a certain Charles Darrow . . . Indeed, Amy had been engaged to Charles in Paris. Amy had regretted the engagement, she said; had provoked a quarrel; broken with Charles; come home. Isabel had never met Charles—Amy called him Chas—but she felt as though she knew him; Amy talked so much about him. Every few days, indeed, Amy told her all over again the whole story of the engagement; proved conclusively that Chas was in the wrong. Whenever, in their drives, Isabel caught fragments of conversation between Amy and Jerry in the front seat, it always seemed to be about Chas . . . Chas was still in Paris . . . Jerry was jealous of Chas.

Amy's gleaming big black car slid over the gauzy, starlit horizon while still Isabel was not a great distance from the house; came to a velvety stop at the side of the road; and both Bid and Jerry leaped out. Jerry stood by the car at attention, but Bid walked to meet her.

They certainly had class, those two men, Isabel reflected. And Bid looked as fresh as though he had just shaved and bathed. But as ever, when she first met Bid, a shiver of repulsion caught Isabel—she wondered what so attracted her in his murky, sullen, wettish face with its shock of black hair and the yellow-green eyes. His nose, broken in football, creased in the middle. But even as she wondered, he took her hand in his warm, close, tingling clasp; drew her to the car step.

The repulsion instantly disappeared. As instantly the attraction which his proximity inevitably exerted set up within her its feverish unrest . . . And as she contemplated the picture—Amy indolently motionless at the wheel, so dazzling in her black furs; with her calm, "Greetings, you

wild woman!" Jerry's pictorial, coppery handsomeness—a kind of joy-in-life thrilled her, shook her, sent to her cheeks a mad rush of blood which cast the rouge like a floating film to the surface of its melted, rose-velvet flood. Jerry produced a silver flask; poured into the silver cup-like top a foaming liquid; pleasantly assuring her as he passed it that another little drink wouldn't do her any harm.

"We saved you a div," Jerry declared as she started to hand the silver cup back to him; and he filled it again. Then Bid helped her into the back seat; piled rugs about her, and they were off. Bid outlined the plans for the evening. At the Three Cities for dinner and dancing; and then over to Marm Willoughby's for supper. "After that we'll see—if you want to drive the rest of the night, we can go to the city for breakfast—"

The cocktails had entirely dissipated Isabel's fatigue. Their pungency seemed to gloat back and forth through a sudden exhilaration, sparkling and coloring it. And yet she felt a celestial languor—already she was floating beyond these marvelously bright stars.

"Marm Willoughby's," she murmured slowly. "At last you're making good on that Marm Willoughby proposition. I'd almost begun to believe she was a myth."

"Yes. Marm Willoughby's. Marm Willoughby's a great friend of mine and when I say go— It's going to be one gay, glad night, Isabel. Am I not right, Jerry? One glad, gay night."

"Surest thing you know!" Jerry promptly reenforced Bid from his front seat. "One glad, gay night!"

Both men laughed tumultuously. Under the fur rug Bid's hand found Isabel's; grasped it tighter and tighter until she made a little gasp of remonstrance. Bid was always hurting her a little. Once she nearly fainted when he pressed her too close. And mischief with him always took the form of pinching her.

In front, as usual, although Jerry was already engagingly silly, Amy was her calm self. Isabel had never seen anybody like Amy. No matter what she drank, her delicate bloneness was never staled, her exquisite lucidity never blurred. "Me," Isabel often said contemptuously of herself, "one thimbleful—and I'm ready to sob out my troubles on anybody's shoulder." She hated herself as she recalled her actions



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afterwards; "giggling and screaming," she put it. But she always comforted herself by the thought that it was those very high spirits which made her an addition to any such party.

She was not giggling and screaming now. That stage would come later, probably when Bid produced a second flask. Then last of all when Amy brought forth the great double thermos which she always loaded up. Well, then, Isabel knew, she was likely to do any insane thing. It egged her on, of course—the knowledge that the other three enjoyed these mad pranks. Now, however, she rested quiescent at the heart of her dream. And it pleased Bid tonight to let her stay there. Ordinarily he tormented her during this early *exaltée* period until her vision was torn to ribbons by her own screaming remonstrances. Into this dream floated a dialogue from the front seat.

"Yes—but I won't tell you!" Jerry remarked in the pleasantest of voices.

"You don't mean that!" came Amy's coaxing tone.

"Sure—won't?" she asked again.

"Nope!"

"Jerry-boy, tell me!"

"No sir!"

"Jerry—" A pause. A faint feather of sound. Amy was pressing her lips to Jerry's, Isabel conjectured.

"No! But I like the bribe."

Amy's voice, pettish, "I know it won't interest me."

"Won't it? If you knew what I knew about Chas, I bet you wouldn't be here." Mischievous and triumph struggled in Jerry's laugh.

Came Amy's most velvety-silver tone; her blandest accent:

"You bore me talking so much about Chas."

Then Bid pinched Isabel and she squealed.

They passed what Isabel considered a wonderful evening at the Three Cities. The Three Cities was a big road house at the fork of three roads. One road led to the metropolis, the other two to cities of minor importance. Most of the widely piazzaded lower floor was dining room, glassy dancing space. From one vined and latticed corner a group of uniformed negroes poured a flood of jazz into the warm stale air.

The food was delicious, and expensive. The dancing crowd was a heterogeneous miscellany; passing tourists; clerks from the city with their girls; a few country sports; a party here and there of four or eight, really smart.

At first Bid and Jerry alternated partners. But as the evening wore on, Jerry danced solely with Amy, and Bid only with Isabel. Isabel loved to dance with Bid. She could adapt her step to any man's; but Bid was a perfect height for her; their dancing rhythms were the same. Isabel was fluid; she danced with her entire body. Amy was a beautiful dancer, too; but she did not lend herself so moldingly to her partner as Isabel. "Amy's too much of a lady," Isabel humbly expressed the difference to herself.

As Bid had promised, it proved to be one glad, gay night. Each of the men had two flasks; and at intervals between dancing they all retired to the automobile for these refreshments. They had not touched

Amy's reserve when twelve o'clock came and the music stopped.

"Zowie, that air's good!" said Isabel as Amy noiselessly maneuvered the car out from the wriggling, fuming mass of black crustaceans which surrounded the Three Cities. "Drive round a little, Amy, will you, before we go to Marm Willoughby's? Aren't you dizzy yourself?"

But Amy's joyous laughter, thrilling the starry night, proved her clear-headedness. "We'll fix you, young woman!" Jerry, a little thickly, threatened Amy. "The cure for that superiority is the hair of the dog that bit you. And another little drink won't do you any harm. Stop the boat, Amy!"

With a second challenging ripple of laughter, Amy brought the car to a gliding quiet. They sat talking . . . drinking . . . laughing . . . and drinking again . . . To Isabel the stars floated back and forth as though colossal sidereal tides were bringing into harbor the silver flotsam of all space . . .

It was nearly two when they reached Marm Willoughby's. The high, rectangular, tree-shrouded house, set far back from the road, showed but a single guiding light as they entered. In the blaze from a late moon the road seemed to coil about the grounds like a serpent of brassy silver. Amy let Isabel and Bid out at the front steps; parked the car at the back; returned with Jerry.

A negro servant let them in. Marm Willoughby, he explained, was not at home; called away by sickness in the family; but there was a supper laid out for the party, and he himself would serve it. He had a message from Marm Willoughby. "You is the only party has made resahvations. Mistah Kitching is to understan' that the house is his."

"Marm Willoughby's!" Isabel looked curiously about her. Why, it was not at all what she had anticipated. Well, what had she expected? A regular dining hall with a dance hall, crowded with gay people? No, not that exactly! And yet not this. She had never seen a place like this. Rifts of clear space broke in the haze of her thinking. But, after all, wasn't it like any modest summer home?

Downstairs was apparently but a four room floor; the square hall into which they entered; the parlor in which they stood; dining room; kitchen. But how ugly they were in proportion, how high-ceiled; and all those high, gaunt doors, painted rose color . . . All the pennants and calendars and silly bric-a-brac could not take away a look of coldness. Isabel's weaving memory brought back a picture, as they turned into the grounds, of a series of out-houses extending back under the shine of the stars. And a more weaving conjecture guessed that the upstairs would be four more rooms . . . Marm Willoughby—why, she remembered now that Bid had told her this—accommodated small parties. That had sounded interesting, exciting when Bid explained it. But somehow now it seemed strange . . . sordid . . .

The dinner was served—it began with the most delicious *hors d'œuvres* that Isabel had ever seen. That feeling of strangeness wore away as they talked and laughed. Suddenly Isabel observed that the waiter had gone. In fact he must have disappeared before the close of the dinner, because they did not eat the courses one

right after another. There were interrupting drinks and more drinks and more drinks. They found themselves at intervals in the parlor . . . Jerry pounding on the piano while in her brittle, sweet voice—how voluptuous, though, was her rich French accent—Amy sang some of the songs she had picked up in France. Jerry and Bid laughed immoderately at these ballads. There was more food . . . salad . . . drinks . . . more singing . . . ices . . . coffee . . . drinks . . . And then they were sliding down the high banister that railed the broad stairway. It was—because the place was so abnormally high-ceiled—long enough to give them a real ride . . . More drinks and then upstairs . . .

Not four rooms there at all . . . only three . . . but a big hall and in front a living room furnished quite prettily; a center table; a maple desk; wicker chairs . . . Jerry banged his head against the telephone box and they all sat down on the floor and laughed. Beyond this living room Isabel glimpsed through the door a chamber with white painted furniture . . . opening out of it, a bathroom.

More drinks . . . torpor . . . Voices . . . quarreling voices . . . familiar voices, though . . . A row near, very near. Yet Bid, sitting across the room from her, paid no attention. Isabel listened, languidly interested. Then intensely interested . . . She knew who they were. Why, of course . . . Amy and Jerry . . . Amy and Jerry had gone out into the hall to talk . . . Amy had closed the door so that she would not hear. In Amy's raised voice. "Tell me, Jerry, where Chas is. Tell me!"

"Nossir!"

"Tell me, angel Jerry, and Amy will give you one sweet little kiss."

"Nossir!"

"You dev—tell me . . . is he on the ocean?"

Jerry hiccoughed a laugh. "No!"

"You tell me! Tell me or I'll walk right out of this place."

"He's zere."

"Where?"

"Nyork!"

"What hotel?"

"No 'tel! Z'eez driving down tonight after zeatre—zee you."

"He's driving down tonight to Belaze . . . to see me. Is that right?"

"Yez."

Complete silence out in the hall from Jerry; complete silence from Amy; Jerry singing his favorite song—the aviation classic: "The higher she goes, the harder she falls." The rush of Amy's footstep. A knock on the door. Why did Amy knock? . . . rushed, swaying, to open to her. But, with his hand on the knob, he paused, held by the shrill imperativeness of Amy's voice.

"Isabel! Isabel! I've got to go home—at once. Do you understand—at once! Will you stay here or will you come with me?"

How surprising that Amy's voice, which was so near when she talked with Jerry out there, should come from so long a distance at the very door. From a distance, equally far in the other direction, Isabel had to pull an answer.

"I'll go with you of course, Amy."

Isabel rose from the footstool where she found she had been sitting. But Bid

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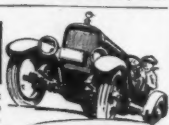
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suddenly bent over, locked the door and removed the key. "No, you're not going," he said cunningly.

Confusion.

"Why Bid, what do you mean? Of course I'm going. I can't stay here with you alone! I've got to leave with Amy. Unlock the door, Bid!"

"No you don't, Isabel! You're going to stay here with me!"

"Bid! What are you talking about? Bid, give me the key."

"Hurry, Isabel! Hurry! For heaven's sake, hurry!"

"I can't get him to give me the key, Amy. He doesn't know what he's doing!"

"The higher she goes, the harder she falls!"

"Give her the key, Bid!"

"Give me the key, Bid. You give me . . ."

"No—can't have the key!"

"Hurry, Isabel, I can't wait!"

"I am hurrying, Amy! but he won't for God's sake, give me that key, Bid!"

"Nope, can't have key!"

"The higher she goes . . ."

"Key . . . key . . . give me . . ."

"Hurry . . . hurry . . . I can't wait any longer Isabel!"

"—harder she falls!"

"Bid, I tell you give me that key or . . ."

"I'm through . . . I'm going."

"For heaven's sake, Amy, wait . . . don't leave me alone . . . for God's sake, Amy . . . Amy!"

A motor whirring below.

"Bid . . . the key . . . Bid . . . Amy . . . the key . . . oh, Amy . . . Bid . . . Jerry, help me!"

"The higher . . ."

"Amy . . . Amy!"

Silence.

Bid walked to the window, opened it. He laughed mischievously as he dropped the key outside. He spread his hand open, palm toward her, like a prestidigitator on the stage, to show her it was empty. In the hall, Jerry ceasing suddenly to sing.

Isabel walked past Bid to the window, glanced out. Too high a drop. She sat down in front of the desk. Flashes, lightning-swift, were driving back and forth through her head. Her mind was sizzling and spluttering like the electric wire over a stalled street car; yet she caught a glimpse of something every time a flash came. . . .

She was in as perilous a situation as any girl could be . . . no help anywhere . . . the negro was gone . . . Jerry was in a drunken stupor . . . Bid was drunk and he would be drunk . . . she must get out of it somehow . . . Amy had deserted her . . . In Bid's condition she might be kept there late into tomorrow . . .

Flash!

Why, Amy was a rotter . . . Amy was . . . why, of course . . . Amy was bad . . . she was not like Amy . . . not bad . . . only—wayward . . . that was all . . . not bad . . . wayward . . . only wayward . . .

Flash!

Why, she was a wayward girl . . . a wayward girl like Della Eff . . . and the long line of Della's predecessors . . . wayward . . . locked in a road house with a drunk . . . Mathilda Hall's niece was wayward . . .

Flash!

Cosmopolitan for May, 1923

Amy was a snob . . . Amy had just been using her . . . Amy had, on her return from Paris, needed a companion . . . somebody not in her own set . . . who wouldn't tell . . .

Flash!

Dropping the Belaize girls, one by one! . . . the Belaize girls had dropped Amy . . . just as . . . just as . . .

Flash!

Just as the Little Finger girls had dropped Isabel . . .

Flash!

Of course Amy was in love with Chas . . . Chas had broken the engagement . . . Amy would do anything to get him back . . . Amy was perfectly willing to risk their friendship to get home before Chas discovered that Amy was not at Miss Hall's house . . . And Amy—trust her—would get home in time . . . she would make up with Chas . . . Amy had abandoned her to . . . Amy had money and social position . . . And clever . . . Chas would never know . . . Amy could wriggle out of any situation . . . but she'd leave a friend stranded in the mud . . . a wayward girl like Della Eff . . .

A stir behind her. Bid wobbled over to the desk; stood swaying there beside her. Her thoughts kept up their flashing.

A wayward girl . . . like Della Eff . . . She'd need every atom of the ingenuity she'd learned from Amy . . . Della Eff!

An idea came to her. The telephone! If she could only get Bid out of the room . . .

"Bid, dear," she said in an accent as clear and precise as Amy's, "there seems to be a bathroom here. Don't you think you'd better take a cold bath? It'll fix you up."

Bid nodded with a solemn understanding.

"Co'd ba'd fizz me up!" he repeated intelligently.

She listened to Bid lunging through the bedroom into the bathroom . . . heard water running there.

She pulled the receiver off the telephone. She breathed a number into it. Ringing! Long ringing! Prolonged . . . everlasting . . . eternal . . . ringing! Oh, thank God . . . a voice.

"Della, speak low and quick—did I wake Auntie?"

"No!"

"Della, I'm in awful trouble—awful! Don't let her know. Call Wood Vining at the number he gave you this morning. You wrote it on the pad. Tell him to get a machine and come after me at once. I'm at Marm Willoughby's. The third house at the right on the Lathrop Road out of Norbury. The door's locked. I can't get out. Tell him the key to the room I'm in is on the grass under the lighted window. Say it all after me, Della . . . That's right! Work quick, Della!"

Bid swayed back into the anteroom. "Tub won't fill up!" he announced tragically. Isabel followed him into the bathroom. The tub was empty.

"You forgot to put the plug in," she said.

He bent to the plug; turned on the water again. Isabel straightened him up as, losing his balance, he started to fall into the tub. Stealthily Isabel looked for a key to the bathroom door. There was none. The faucet released a needle-fine

stream. She calculated it would take fifteen minutes to fill the tub. She stood talking, coquetting, fluttering about him. Fifteen minutes of that, and . . . surreptitiously she pulled out the plug . . . "Water's gone again!" Bid murmured sadly when he discovered it. For the third time he turned on the needle stream . . . sat down on a small white painted stool . . . His head lolled . . .

A distant hum . . . Bid's eyes were glassy. The hum came nearer . . . and nearer.

Isabel stole into the other room. She opened the window. A flivver turned into the drive. "Oh, thank God—Wood! But no—Della Eff!"

Della alighted; can. running round to the side of the house; nodded, silent, upwards; instantly plucked the key from the grass as though led to it by magic. She disappeared in the direction of the back of the house. Could she get in? Isabel heard the rattle of windows . . . a foot-step on the stairs. The key turned in the lock. The door opened. There came the sound of a fall from the bathroom.

"Where is he?" Della surprisingly asked. She as surprisingly added: "I stepped over one of them out there in the hall."

Isabel pointed. Della went into the bathroom with as businesslike an air as though she were buying sugar. No sound came from Bid.

"He's passed out!" Della calmly called. After a long interval Della returned. "I took his collar and coat and shoes off," she said simply, "and put him to bed. You'd better smooth your hair."

A little later they were in the flivver. Isabel held a corner of Della Eff's coat.

"I tried to get Vining," Della was explaining after a while, "but I couldn't. Some old dope answered the phone. He couldn't hear me and I couldn't get anything outta him. Of course I hadda be cagey and he was half asleep. So I see I'd gotta come after you myself. I left a note in case your Auntie waked up—saying you had phoned and asked me to come after you as you didn't feel well."

She paused; but it was only a pause. She was, Isabel knew, going on. Isabel braced herself to accept a lecture from Della Eff. But she would endure it . . . oh, humbly . . . all the rest of her life she would take anything from Della.

Finally Della spoke. Dispassionately first.

"They're awful hard to manage when they're drunk. You hafta have the knack." Then sympathetically but with a faint quality of the vindicated prophet: "That Valentine girl turned out just the way I know she would; getting you into this and then beating it. She's a rotter—I got that the first instant I seen her."

The last carelessly: "I made the old dope that came to the phone understand one thing. I told him to tell that Vining fellow you'd like to have him call tomorrow evening."

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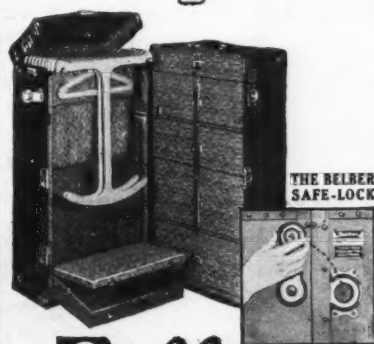
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